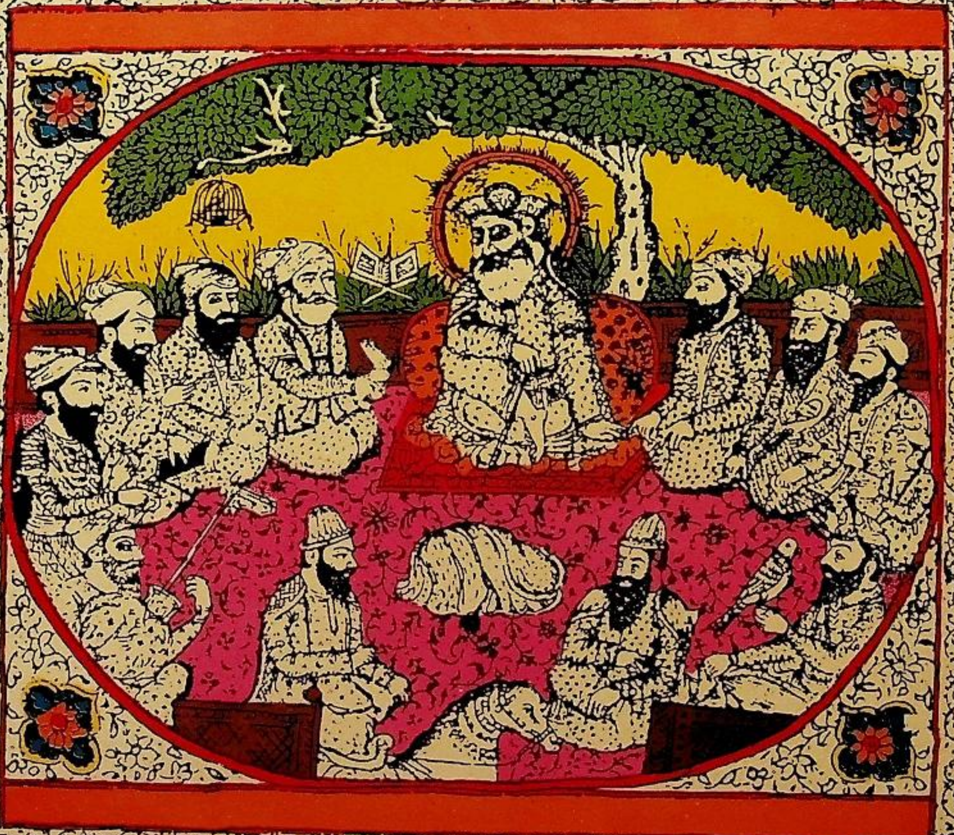
Popular Sikh Art



W. H. McLeod

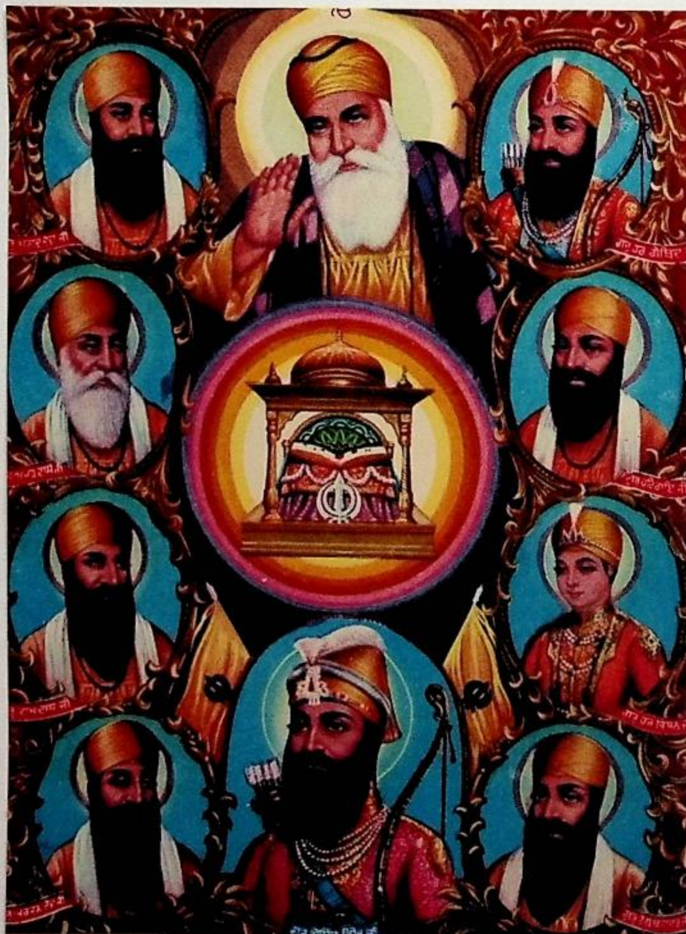
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Popular Sikh Art describes the role of bazaar art amongst the Sikh people and analyses the posters which are produced today. Three topics are covered in its treatment of the subject. First, it presents a historical survey of all Punjabi art from its beginnings up to the present day. Secondly, it investigates the modern bazaar print, describing its origins and discussing the various features which are characteristic of it. Thirdly, it retells the story illustrated so graphically in a succession of typical posters, a story which faithfully represents the entire range of Sikh history as popularly conceived. The book concludes with a series of 54 miniature posters (plus a frontispiece) which have actually been purchased in the bazaars of Delhi.

Dr W. H. McLeod teaches History at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. Amongst his works on Sikh history and religion are *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, *Early Sikh Tradition*, *The Sikhs: History, Religion and Society*, and *Who is a Sikh?*

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POPULAR SIKH ART



The Ten Gurus

POPULAR SIKH ART

W. H. McLeod

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Preface

During my first five years in the Punjab I was notably unimpressed by the popular bazaar prints which occupied so much wall-space in small shops and in many homes. Inhibited by false notions of art and culture I saw them as garish and crude. The kindest remark I could muster was that they were unsophisticated. Unspoken preconceptions relegated them to a category reserved for the semi-literate and the uncouth.

In retrospect I cringe at the mere recollection. Such a verdict was patronizing in the extreme, as much an implicit comment on those who displayed bazaar prints as an explicit opinion of the art which they represented. My only defence can be that I was myself untutored in the understanding of popular folk-art and that I was by no means alone in my condescending lack of appreciation.

The person who first persuaded me to see the popular art of the Punjab with different eyes was Robert Skelton. In 1964 I was working on Guru Nanak at the School of Oriental and African Studies and Skelton, having learnt of this interest, invited me to the Victoria and Albert Museum to assist in the identification of a particular print or drawing. My recollection of the actual picture is exceedingly vague and although I was certainly flattered by the invitation I suspect that my visit did little to assist Skelton. He, however, did a great deal to assist me. Having put away the prime cause of my visit he produced a set of woodcut prints, exceedingly crude in execution yet immediately recognizable as Sikh. Guru Nanak was conspicuously evident in the prints. Guru Gobind Singh and Maharaja Ranjit Singh also figured prominently.

I do not remember Skelton's actual words, but my distinct recollection is that the conversation ran as follws. These woodcuts, he explained, had

been collected in the Lahore bazaar by Lockwood Kipling late in the nineteenth century. One merely had to glance at them, he said, to realize their value as a testimony to popular Sikh perceptions at the time when they were prepared and sold. And why was I being shown these prints? 'Because', he continued, 'I want you to follow Lockwood Kipling's example when you return to the Punjab. I suggest that you go into a bazaar and there purchase a selection of the prints currently on sale. Put them away for fifty years and then look at them again. You will find them exceedingly interesting as a commentary on popular Sikh perceptions in the mid-1960s.'

I followed Skelton's first piece of advice but not his second. As soon as I returned to the Punjab in July 1965 I visited Amritsar and there purchased a bundle of bazaar prints. I did not stow them away for fifty years, however, preferring instead to study them from time to time. This was partly because I was anxious to understand contemporary Sikh perceptions immediately, rather than in my distant and doubtful retirement. It was also partly because the style had gripped me. I actually liked these pictures which earlier had impressed me as garish and crude.

The prints accompanied me to England in 1969 and thence to New Zealand in 1971. They would probably have remained in my sole custody but for a most interesting book published by the Delhi branch of the Oxford University Press in 1977. Unknown to me, Dr Vassilis G. Vitsaxis, the Greek Ambassador to India, had developed a similar interest in Hindu bazaar prints and had gathered a selection of the smallest size. These formed the basis for his *Hindu Epics, Myths and Legends in Popular Illustrations* (Delhi, 1977). The publisher purchased several thousand copies of each print from two Delhi suppliers and pasted a complete sequence into each copy of the book. This meant that purchasers of the book received actual bazaar prints, not reproductions (apart from a few black and white plates which Dr Vitsaxis included to complete the sequence).

If this could be done for Hindu bazaar prints why not for their Sikh counterparts? The publisher agreed and *Popular Sikh Art* is the result.

Acknowledgements: For advice, assistance in locating prints and general support I am grateful to the late Dr M. S. Randhawa, Colonel H. B. Singh,

Miss Betty Tyers, Master Harbans Singh, S. Gurbux Singh, Dr Satish Saberwal, Professor Surjit Singh Hans, Professor Daniel Smith, Professor Ursula King, Professor Harjot Singh Oberoi, Mr John McIndoe, Associate Professor Albert Moore, Dr Roger Collins, Miss C. Hollister-Jones, Dr Clarence McMullen, Miss Neena Chander, Mr P. N. Kapoor, Mr Santokh Singh Bhullar, and as always my wife Margaret. For help at a critical stage I am profoundly grateful to Dr Amrik Singh. For supplying prints I join the publisher in expressing appreciation to Messrs Hem Chander Bhargava of Delhi and Messrs Ananta Ram Gupta, also of Delhi. For typing the entire work I thank Miss Paula Waby.

University of Otago
Dunedin

W.H. McLeod

Contents

Introduction

It is easy to criticize popular art. Like popular music, it caters for an uneducated taste, employing unsubtle means to communicate whatever simple messages may be currently fashionable. Whereas the actual genre may be resilient its many manifestations seldom survive for long. Briefly favoured, they soon lose their appeal and are replaced by others of the same kind. Most disappear without trace, never to be seen again.

From an aesthetic pointof view this impulse to dwindle and disappear may involve no great loss. Surely it is their very lack of artistic quality which renders such works ephemeral, their ultimate fate being a sensible judgement on their own pathetic weakness. A social historian, however, must view this process with much greater concern. Popular art, in its many forms, provides valuable evidence of current attitudes and life-styles for those who know how to interpret it. Focusing our attention exclusively on 'great' art merely perpetuates a view of history which exults the elite and ignores the ordinary. Most ephemera is either ordinary or eccentrically extraordinary. The social historian may feel able to manage without the latter, but certainly not without the former.

The purpose of this book is to save from destruction examples of a popular genre of Indian religious art and to offer a commentary on what this art represents. In so doing it seeks to develop and extend the valuable work of the two collectors mentioned in the Preface, J. Lockwood Kipling and Vassilis G. Vitsaxis. Both were concerned with bazaar prints and this book, following Vitsaxis's Hindu example, deals with those which are specifically intended for a Sikh market. For present purposes, Kipling's collection is particularly valuable. This is because it enables us to set the modern print firmly in its historical context, revealing the sources from

which it has grown and offering a comparison which extends over more than a century. Much can be learnt from studying the modern bazaar print in isolation. A great deal more can be learnt by studying it within its historical context.

It is most important to appreciate that, although this book seeks to make a contribution to our understanding of Sikh history, it does not offer a history of events as they actually happened. It deals in popular perceptions of the historical past. This means that it must concentrate on popular tradition, not on the carefully researched findings of the scholar. The latter may insist that episodes treasured in the popular imagination are legends which can have no place in a respectable history. Such caution is misplaced. Traditional content and interpretations can indeed have a place in respectable academic history, provided that their status is clearly explained. Indeed, they supply essential components. For a history of popular perceptions they are the substance of the record, just as they must dominate our attempt to analyze contemporary views.

The principal difficulty with such history is, of course, the problem of sources. Most people do not write books and any attempt they may make to enunciate their views lingers no longer than the sound of their words. Many of them, however, demonstrate preferences by the kind of literature which they buy; and even the unlettered can do this when works of popular art are available. Representative selections of ephemeral literature and ephemeral art certainly deserve to be preserved and the results may well merit as much attention from social historians as sophisticated documents or hard data. The need is one which this book seeks to address.

1. The Development of Sikh Art

The emergence of Sikh art

We begin with a problem of definition. What is Sikh art? This fundamental question has been implicitly answered in a variety of ways. Art has been regarded as 'Sikh' for any of the following reasons or for various combinations of them. (1) It may be the work of artists who are Sikhs. (2) It may be produced within territory governed or otherwise dominated by Sikhs. (3) It may be executed under Sikh patronage. (4) It may depict Sikh subjects. (5) It may manifest a recognizable style found only in works which are by Sikhs or which are distinctively Sikh in content.

In practice most critics have adopted a broad definition, one which tacitly combines the third and fourth possibilities noted above. This derives from a natural concentration on the early decades of the nineteenth century. Sikh power was then at its height and from the Lahore court there eventually issued the artistic results of courtly patronage. Though executed in an essentially alien style the patronage and content are unmistakably Sikh. Here, it has been claimed, we have the emergence of painting that is 'truly Sikh'.[1]

This verdict must surely be rejected. There are examples of Sikh art thinly scattered over the two centuries which precede the principal products of the Lahore court and if we are to set an actual date on the first identifiable emergence of a recognizably Sikh art it will be located in the middle years of the seventeenth century. This, however, does not immediately solve the problem of what constitutes Sikh art unless we are prepared to settle for content as the one essential criterion. Although the earliest Sikh art differs radically from the courtly art of the Sikh kingdom it cannot be regarded as totally different. External influences can be easily identified, imparting to pictures which are manifestly Sikh in content a form and style which are instantly familiar from earlier precedents.

This dependence upon a particular precedent is natural and altogether unsurprising. It is a development which one should expect and there is nothing abnormal about the first appearance of the art which we can identify as recognizably Sikh. Although artists may give expression to a new allegiance or a fresh range of ideals, they are bound to be influenced by the established traditions of the culture within which they were nurtured. This applies with particular force to relatively unsophisticated folk-art and, if the earlier examples of Sikh art reflect current Punjabi styles, this should occasion no surprise. In the case of early Sikh art this natural expectation is reinforced by its actual context. The earliest examples appear within a particular kind of literature, one which was demonstrably shaped by an earlier exemplar. The antecedent form carried with it an associated artistic tradition and it was entirely natural that it should exercise a dual influence. A dominant literary influence was thus accompanied by a secondary influence in terms of art.

Sikh art was born in the *janam-sākhīs* and apart from an isolated series of portraits it was evidently confined to this context for well over a century. The janam-sakhis are hagiographic accounts of the life of Guru Nanak, popular narratives which have enjoyed a considerable popularity throughout the history of the Sikh *Panth*. Each consists of a series of anecdotes, loosely organized in varying chronological patterns and laying particular emphasis on Guru Nanak's travels within and beyond the Punjab. A few of the janam-sakhis are isolated works, each with its unique series of anecdotes. Others belong to recognizable groups or traditions, growing in length and complexity with each successive recension. The so-called *B40 Janam-sākhī* is the most notable of the individual janam-sakhis. Amongst the latter variety the best known are those of the *Purātan* and *Bālā* traditions.[2]

These anecdotes, many of them simple yet graphic, invited an associated art tradition. The stories which they relate are readily represented in picture form and are obviously enhanced by such illustrations. Tales of the marvellous such as 'The Cobra's Shadow' (figure 17) and 'The Monster's Cauldron' (figure 19) can be vividly illustrated and, in common with other such anecdotes, they have provided janam-sakhi illustrators with popular subjects.

The same natural development had already occurred within the folklore

tradition which served as a model for the janam-sakhis. The exemplar was provided by Sufi tradition. Prominent members of the various Sufi orders had long since attracted a substantial hagiography in North India, as elsewhere in the Muslim world, and this hagiography supplied an appropriate model for members of the newly-fledged Nanak panth. It served as a model in terms of structure, the loose anecdotal sequence of the janam-sakhis replicating the *tazkira* of the Sufi hagiographers. Within this structure janam-sakhi compilers incorporated a wide variety of anecdotes, some of them direct borrowings from the Sufi stock.[3] In literary terms their debt to the earlier tradition was substantial.

Although orthodox Muslim doctrine frowns upon pictorial art, this view did little to inhibit its development amongst the followers of Sufi *pirs* in North India. Anecdotes invite pictorial illustration and the Sufi tradition duly responded. There were, of course, the obvious constraints imposed by the circumstances of a pre-printing age. The requisite skills were neither easily acquired nor widely available, with the result that patronage was a necessary feature of the artistic tradition. It was, nevertheless, a tradition which spoke directly to the popular understanding, representing familiar stories in easily-identifiable forms.[4]

Having emulated the structure and literary style of Sufi hagiography the janam-sakhi tradition had little difficulty in adopting its associated art. Patrons who commissioned the preparation of janam-sakhi manuscripts were offered the possibility of adding illustrations and a few of them were able to overcome the usual constraints. The results predictably reflect the model and, although Guru Nanak can always be easily recognized, the Sufi influence is too obvious to be ignored. If one were to overlook details representing the janam-sakhi image of Baba Nanak it would be very easy to mistake him for a Sufi pir. In artistic terms the origins of the early janam-sakhi styles are immediately recognizable.

The earliest of all extant janam-sakhis also provides the earliest examples of Sikh art. This is the *Bālā* janam-sakhi dated S.1715 (AD 1658) owned by P. N. Kapoor of Delhi, a manuscript which includes twenty-nine illustrations. A lengthy gap separates this 1658 work from the next illustrated janam-sakhi to survive, a *Bālā* product held by the family of Bhai Arduman Singh in Bagharian (Patiala district). The Bagharian manuscript, which incorporates forty-two illustrations, is dated S.1781 (AD 1724).[5]

Nine years later the *B40 Janam-sākhī* was completed, the last of the extant early janam-sakhis to be illustrated. A lengthy gap follows with little janam-sakhi activity of any kind and no illustrated version until the very end of the eighteenth century. A small revival then takes place and a few manuscripts appear during the period of the Sikh kingdom. This period was eventually terminated by the British annexation of the Punjab in 1849. With the British came the printing press, and with the printing press came the effective end of manuscript production.

Amongst the small collection of surviving janam-sakhi manuscripts, both with and without illustrations, the *B40 Janam-sākhī* commands a particular importance for the text which it supplies. This manuscript, completed in S.1790 (AD 1733), surfaced in Lahore late in the nineteenth century and was acquired by the India Office Library in 1907.[6] The fifty-seven illustrations which it includes are of paramount importance. This value derives from more than its comparatively early age and specific dating. The artist is named; the provenance of the manuscript can be deduced; the illustrations are of superb quality; and they are truly representative of the earliest Sikh art in terms of style as well as content.[7]

The style is one which features a three-quarter or full-faced Guru conversing with attendants and interlocutors shown in profile, commonly set against a rich background of trees, flowers and birds. As the sequence proceeds, Nanak grows progressively older, starting as a child and ending as a venerable sage. The adult figure is dressed in garments which provide a standard uniform for the Nanak of early Sikh art. These include a loose robe (*jāmā*), tight-fitting trousers (*pājāmā*), a distinctive crown-shaped hat (*mukaṭ*), and slippers (*desī jūtī*). Over his shoulders is tied a tightly-folded shawl. On one shoulder rests a fakir's cord (*selī*) and in his hand he carries a rosary (*mālā*). With him, prominently represented, is his Muslim minstrel Mardana who, like his Master, bears a vertical *tilak* on his forehead. In some of the illustrations Nanak sits beneath the overspreading tree, which in Sikh iconography represents the royal canopy of authority.

There can be no mistaking the figure which appears in each of the fifty-seven *B40* illustrations. The figure plainly is Baba Nanak and the iconography which surrounds him is patently Sikh. It is, moreover, an iconography which constitutes an established tradition. In these terms it is possible to identify a distinctively Sikh art and to affirm that the

tradition was well established before the middle of the eighteenth century. As we have already indicated, however, it cannot be affirmed that the style or the iconography is uniquely Sikh. The debt to Sufi patterns is too marked to permit any such claims. This indicates the answer which must be given to the question of how one is to define Sikh art. It must be an answer which focuses on content rather than on style. The latter is borrowed. The purpose for which it is borrowed is, however, distinctively Sikh and it soon generates its own iconographic apparatus.

This response is first developed within the context of the janam-sakhis, a tradition which continues to the present day. Meanwhile, another interest had emerged. Half a century before the completion of the *B40 Janam-sākhī* a patron with a personal interest in the succession of Gurus had commissioned a series of portraits depicting most of the ten Masters. The results are interesting for two principal reasons. They provide the earliest extant example of the 'portraits of the Gurus' genre; and they supply a unique instance of the courtly Mughal style applied to Sikh subjects.

The sequence comprises a series of portraits executed by a Mughal painter for Ram Rai, the elder son of Guru Har Rai. According to Sikh tradition, Ram Rai (b. 1646) was debarred from the succession as a result of his attempt to secure the favour of the Emperor Aurangzeb.[8] Ram Rai was subsequently granted lands within the hill territory of the Raja of Garhwal and around the settlement which he established on these lands there developed the town known as Dehra Dun. There he built an impressive gurdwara and continued to maintain his claim to the title of Guru. Eventually he was assassinated by his own followers in 1688.

During the decade prior to his death Ram Rai evidently commissioned a Mughal artist to paint the portraits which his descendants still hold in Dehra Dun.[9] The series begins with a portrait of Guru Nanak, for whom Ram Rai himself evidently served as model.[10] It continues to Ram Rai's father, the seventh Guru, with a particular emphasis on his great-grandfather Guru Hargobind (five portraits). Ram Rai himself also appears as one of the subjects.

The series is exceedingly interesting as an early portrayal of the Gurus by an artist of no mean skill. As such, it represents the first known example of a variety of portraiture which was later to enjoy a notable

popularity within the Panth. There is, however, no evidence of any link connecting this series with the subsequent development of Sikh art. It is an isolated contribution, one which remained within the heretical confines of distant Dehra Dun and exercised no evident influence on the popular janam-sakhi art of its own period, nor on the courtly tradition which was to emerge in the Sikh Kingdom of Lahore more than a century later.

The lengthy period separating Ram Rai's Mughal commission from the Lahore court of Ranjit Singh and his successors is largely barren as far as Sikh art is concerned. Apart from the Bagharian manuscript and the distinguished contribution of the *B40 Janam-sākhī* the eighteenth century has very little to offer. This is scarcely surprising, for it was a disturbed period marked by recurrent invasion and warfare across the Punjab plains. Such circumstances are not conducive to the production of artistic work requiring patronage and practised skill; and painting, which may have been executed during this period or earlier, would have been exposed to serious risk of loss or destruction. Signs of a restored interest in the traditional janam-sakhi art do not reappear until the very end of the century.[11] Significantly, the reappearance coincides with the restoration of order to the Punjab under the rapidly growing power of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. This growth in power and conquest did more than permit the reappearance of native Punjabi styles. Extending into the nineteenth century and moving outwards from the Punjab, it was soon to bring a fresh and delightfully attractive influence down to the plains. This was the celebrated Pahari tradition, the elegant style which had been nurtured in some of the small hill states lying to the north and north-east of the Punjab.

The arrival of Pahari influence raises once again the problem of what truly constitutes Sikh art. For some the paintings produced during the period of the Sikh kingdom are the finest expression of Sikh art ever achieved. Others, perceiving them primarily as the products of artists nurtured in a distinctively different tradition, are inclined to regard them as alien intrusions masquerading as Sikh art. Our earlier definition would seem to require a rejection of the latter view. We have already acknowledged that a simple extension of the Sufi tradition can be regarded as Sikh art, the determinative factor being content rather than style. If, therefore, the Sikh court of the early nineteenth century chooses to patronize another tradition one might well argue that such a choice would

ipso facto bring the results of that patronage within the bounds of the definition.

There is, however, a difference. In the case of the earlier janam-sakhi tradition there could be no doubting the fundamentally Sikh nature of the content. The emphasis now shifts significantly. Some of the work executed under courtly auspices concerns the illustrating of janam-sakhis or portraits of the Gurus and as such it can obviously meet the requirements of our earlier definition. The bulk of the output during this period, however, consists of royal and aristocratic portraits. Does this constitute Sikh art? The artists are obviously applying an alien tradition to subjects who happen to be Sikhs. We shall continue to treat their work as Sikh art, but in so doing we must acknowledge that we place our definition under severe strain. These, surely, are the outer margins of Sikh art.

The period of Ranjit Singh and his successors (1800–49)

The connection between Sikh patronage and Pahari art was established as a result of Sikh conquest in the Punjab hills. At the very end of the eighteenth century Ranjit Singh became ruler of the Punjab, finally terminating a period of disputed possession and warfare which had lasted for almost a century. Having established himself in Lahore, he proceeded to consolidate his authority in the plains and then extend it into the hills. In 1809 Sansar Chand, ruler of the hill state of Kangra, requested Ranjit Singh's assistance against invading Gurkhas. In return, he ceded the fort of Kangra and this event, together with the annexation of Guler in 1813, initiated a period of Sikh dominance over the hill states. Other small states were subsequently brought under Sikh control and Kangra itself was finally annexed in 1828.

The conquest of the hill states did not produce a widespread Sikh response to Pahari art during the early years of annexation, but some individuals obviously showed an interest and this interest developed during the later years of the Sikh kingdom. Ranjit Singh's own attitude is not entirely clear. It is known that he bestowed some patronage on artists, but the extent of this support and the nature of their work remains uncertain. Two differing views have emerged concerning his response to artists and to the paintings which they produced.

A common opinion associates Ranjit Singh with the general neglect of refined art which, it is claimed, was characteristic of the first generation of Punjabi conquerors. This view is usually softened to avoid giving gratuitous offence, but its essential features are clear. It is an interpretation which acknowledges that Ranjit Singh could be a generous distributor of patronage, but maintains that, for perfectly natural reasons, little of the largesse was bestowed on works of art in the generally accepted sense of the word. Ranjit Singh had been reared during a period of warfare and confusion, circumstances which would scarcely encourage a cultivated interest in art.

This unsympathetic view is countered by a variety of arguments. One rejoinder is to draw attention to the extensive patronage which Ranjit Singh lavished on the development and embellishment of the Golden Temple. This, however, leaves the question of painting uncertain, for most of the murals which were once to be seen in the Golden Temple or its precincts have now disappeared. A more sophisticated response notes the influence of contemporary European reports in encouraging an unsympathetic view of the Maharaja's artistic appreciation, claiming that greater reliance should be placed on Punjabi reports than on those of visiting foreigners. The latter, it is suggested, were selective in terms of what they noticed and biased in their estimates of what they did observe. References by such writers as the court chronicler Sohan Lal Suri indicate that the Maharaja was by no means ignorant of painting, nor did he lack an appreciation of it.[12]

The truth, as in so many controversies of this kind, seems to lie between the two extremes. Art was certainly not ignored by the Lahore court, particularly during its final decade, but the patronage which it received covered a limited range of interests. These interests reflected the circumstances in which the dynasty had risen to power. Portraiture emerged as the preferred form of painting in the Lahore court and this demand clearly affected the direction followed by the Pahari artists who migrated to the plains.

Three phases may be observed in the development of this interesting connection between Pahari art and Sikh patronage. The first was a continuation of traditional forms in the hill states themselves, but under the auspices of Sikh governors. The choice of governors proved to be

fortunate in this respect. Desa Singh Majithia, his son Lehna Singh Majithia, and the Maharaja's own son, Sher Singh, all proved to be well disposed towards the peoples whom they ruled and the artistic traditions of their new domains.[13] The tradition continued under new management, with a natural shift towards subjects which would interest Sikh patrons.

Rajput families meanwhile maintained their traditional patronage in association with their new rulers, and pictures continued to be painted in the hills throughout the nineteenth century.[14] Some artists, however, appreciated that there might be more generous commissions available at the centre of political power and it was apparently during the eighteen-thirties that a migration of indistinct proportions began. This inaugurated a second phase, comprising the simple transfer of hillsmen and their techniques to the Punjab plains. The third phase followed as these immigrant artists adapted their style to local circumstances and demand, thus producing the so-called 'Sikh' tradition. It was the adapted style of this third phase which strongly emphasized portraiture, thereby excluding much of the subject content which lent such elegance to the original tradition.

By the time we reach the final decade of Sikh rule, the pattern is relatively clear. Pahari influence was well established in Lahore and Amritsar by the time of the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839; and courtly patronage was obviously available, particularly during the brief reign of Maharaja Sher Singh (1840-3). It is this pattern which brings us back to the chronic problem of what constitutes Sikh art. The problem is emphasized during this period by another expression of artistic patronage practised by Maharaja Sher Singh.

Sher Singh's commissions were not exclusively reserved for Indian artists. Patronage was also bestowed on European artists, in particular on the Hungarian visitor August Theodor Schoefft. With the arrival of Schoefft we clearly move beyond the range of Sikh art. The patronage was certainly Sikh and his pretentious oil-paintings ostentatiously glorify the Lahore court of the Sikh ruler. The style, however, is so conspicuously European that any suggestion of a Sikh affiliation must surely be resisted. Together with Emily Eden's celebrated sketches and the earlier work by Vigne they undoubtedly exercised some influence on local styles, but they remained European and no native school emerged in response to their example.[15]

It is this verdict which again raises the perplexing problem of obtaining a clear definition. If Schoefft is to be eliminated because his style is so manifestly exotic, what justification can there be for retaining the distinctively Pahari contribution of the artists from the hills? Again we take refuge in the notion of marginality. The hill states themselves are geographically located on the fringe of the Punjab and the cultural divide distinguishing the hills from the plains is considerably narrower than the broad expanse which so obviously separates Punjabi traditions from European. In the case of the Pahari artists we do at least have janam-sakhi illustrations and portraits of the Gurus, and there is some degree of adaptation in the Pahari style. We must reaffirm our earlier conclusion, insisting that the Pahari work executed under Sikh auspices occupies the margins of Sikh art. It can be neither embraced as authentically Sikh nor dismissed as totally alien.

The first evidence of Pahari art serving Sikh needs actually predates the conquest of the hill states by two decades. This evidence is supplied by a janam-sakhi dated S.1850 (AD 1793) produced on behalf of Sardar Baghel Singh of Chabba in Amritsar district. The manuscript, now located in Sangrur, includes a series of illustrations which are evidently the work of artists painting in the Guler tradition.[16] There is no indication of how Baghel Singh or his scribe acquired the services of Pahari artists, but the style is clearly identifiable and demonstrates that Pahari influence was operating on Sikh art before Ranjit Singh established his dominance on the plains or extended it to the hills.

When Ranjit Singh carried his authority into the hills Guler was the first hill state to be formally annexed and it was Guler which supplied the most distinguished Pahari contribution to traditional Sikh art. Two of its finest works were evidently produced during the early years of Sikh dominance. These are an undated janam-sakhi sequence[17] and a series of paintings portraying the ten Gurus.[18] The janam-sakhi and three of the portraits are now held by the Chandigarh Museum. The remainder of the portraits are a part of the large Pahari collection in the Lahore Museum.[19] All of these works were probably executed during the period 1815-20. An isolated portrait of Guru Gobind Singh, also in the Guler style and now located in the collection of the former Maharaja of Tehri Garhwal, has been tentatively dated *c.* 1830.[20]

After this first flush of religious enthusiasm, the Pahari contribution concentrates almost exclusively on portraiture, virtually all of it gouache until ivories begin to appear following the collapse of the Sikh kingdom. Lahore and Amritsar were the principal centres, but limited patronage was also available in Una, Anandpur, Kapurthala, Kartarpur and Patiala.[21] Of these outstations of Sikh art, Una has proved to be particularly interesting. This small town, a short distance from Anandpur, was founded by Baba Qaladhari, a descendant of Guru Nanak and contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh. His grandson, the venerable Sahib Singh Bedi (1756-1834), was the acknowledged preceptor of Ranjit Singh and it was from his royal disciple that he received an illuminated copy of the *Ādi Granth*. This unusual specimen, said to have been prepared in Kashmir *c.* 1830, contains paintings of scenes from the life of Guru Nanak.[22] As such, it can be firmly placed within the continuing janam-sakhi tradition of Sikh art.

Sahib Singh himself contributed to the maintenance of the earlier tradition by commissioning an illustrated janam-sakhi.[23] This work, which can also be dated *c.* 1830, bears a marked resemblance to the *B40* sequence. In this Una product and in other janam-sakhis of the same period the influence of the Pahari style recedes. Whereas portraiture continues to reflect Pahari influence, the janam-sakhis sustain the earlier tradition represented in the *B40* manuscript, maintaining a style which continues for as long as illustrated janam-sakhis were produced in manuscript form. As far as the janam-sakhis are concerned Pahari influence represents a tangent, a digression which delivered two or three interesting sequences without becoming a dominant force.

The janam-sakhis thus preserve a variety of art which we can accept as unambiguously Sikh. The same can also be said of the murals which were commissioned during the period. Few of these murals have survived and it is evident from their recorded remarks that most foreign visitors of the period would have raised little objection to the decay and disappearance which has overtaken all but a few fragments. Lieutenant William Barr, who visited Lahore in 1839, has left an offensively sarcastic description of one such mural in the royal palace; and Baron Hugel, having viewed the interior of Ranjit Singh's residence in Vazirabad, noted that 'the chief painter of Ranjit's court is certainly not a Raphael'.[24] Such comments

should be treated with scepticism and they should certainly not be permitted to predetermine our judgement. We have already encountered the suggestion that European reports are unlikely to be reliable guides. The rarity of surviving examples may limit our capacity to form a confident opinion of these murals, but we should not use subjective documentary evidence as a satisfactory substitute.[25]

Decay and destruction create an obvious problem with regard to murals painted during the first half of the nineteenth century. Another difficulty concerns dating. Some of the few surviving frescoes which are attributed to this period may actually be the work of a later generation, one which exercised brush or patronage during the early part of the British period rather than the later years of the Sikh kingdom. The problem of differentiating the products of the two periods arises only partly from the failure of artists to date their works and the difficulty of placing dates on the construction of many buildings. It also derives from a general consistency of subject and iconography in the religious art spanning the two periods.

There are, however, a few murals which can be located with reasonable assurance within the period of the Sikh kingdom. As opposed to the gouache painting of the period, the dominant themes are evidently religious. Although portraits of recent or contemporary figures certainly appear amongst the surviving frescoes, they are a distinct minority. Mural art concentrates on religious subjects, much of it representing scenes from Hindu mythology. As with all popular Sikh art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the most favoured of the distinctively Sikh subjects is Guru Nanak, followed by Guru Gobind Singh. Other subjects include Sikh martyrs to Muslim bigotry, notably the sons of Guru Gobind Singh and the eighteenth-century hero, Baba Dip Singh. Nihangs also found their way into several murals and it is evident from recorded descriptions that battle-scenes were often painted on aristocratic walls.[26]

The Guru Nanak of early murals appears in occasional janam-sakhi sequences or as the central figure in a small group. A notable example of the former is the sequence copied directly from Sahib Singh Bedi's janam-sakhi onto the walls of Baba Qaladhari's *samādhi* in Una.[27] The group picture typically comprises Baba Nanak flanked by Mardana and Bala, complete with the standard range of iconographical apparatus. This

format is impressively represented by a panel forming part of a larger frescoe in the Bairagi temple at Ram Tatwali in Hoshiarpur district. The Guru wears his customary robe (jama), shawl (*chaddar*) and crown-shaped hat (mukat). Around his neck is the fakir's cord (seli) and in his hand a rosary (mala). He sits on a small mat supported by the customary cushion (*takīā*) and yogi's crutch (*bairāgan*); and above his head there extends the regal tree. The larger frescoe incorporating this panel includes a group comprising Guru Nanak and the later Gurus.[28]

Mural paintings of Guru Gobind Singh also foreshadow the style and iconography which was to dominate the later nineteenth century. Typically, he appears on horseback holding a falcon and accompanied by a hound and a few attendants. The best of the extant wall-paintings expressing this theme is in the samadhi of Baba Dyal Das at Barnala. Pictures of the first Khalsa initiation ceremony also survive, including one in the Akal Takht.[29]

Apart from the Akal Takht examples most of the surviving frescoes from the first half of the nineteenth century are to be found in comparatively inconspicuous locations. Although there were evidently extensive murals painted in the precincts of the Golden Temple during the period of Ranjit Singh all but one have disappeared, apart from some decorative borders. This is not surprising. Most of these murals evidently depicted scenes from Hindu mythology, a variety of subjects which encountered stern disapproval from Singh Sabha reformers half a century later. The one survival is a picture of Guru Gobind Singh on horseback, painted in the Golden Temple itself on the wall behind the narrow stairway leading to the upper level. This mural is painted in the Pahari style and is said to have been copied from an original miniature in the possession of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra.[30]

The solitary Guru Gobind Singh painting in the Golden Temple is an exception in terms of style as well as location. Pahari influence is predominantly expressed in courtly art and few of the surviving murals warrant this description. Most of them draw us back to the Gurus and to the old-established janam-sakhi traditions. Although, as we have seen, these themes were not wholly neglected by courtly patronage they evidently ranked distinctly lower in royal or aristocratic priority than in popular esteem. As a result, the influences which are dominant in courtly art are present to a much lesser degree in the popular art of the period.

Aristocratic privilege and traditional piety produce distinctively different styles. Whereas the former must necessarily be hedged with reservations there can be no doubting the authentically Sikh quality of the latter.

The early British period (1849-1900)

The defeat of the Sikh armies and the British annexation of the Punjab in 1849 mark a major divide in Sikh art as in so much else. Artists who had earned a comparatively undistinguished living from Sikh patrons were now confronted by a new kind of client with distinctively different preferences. They were also to be confronted with the introduction of the printing press and with lithographic techniques which provided the first opportunity for mass production. Significant changes inevitably followed.

For the artists previously employed by the Lahore court and Sikh aristocracy the dominant presence of the British produced three recognizable changes. These changes were already beginning to appear during the last decade of Sikh rule, as a result of Sher Singh's interest in European styles and the probable migration of painters from British-controlled Delhi. Archer argues in favour of such a migration on the grounds that the Anglo-Mughal style so popular in Delhi makes its first tentative Lahore appearance in 1842.[31] The new style, introduced during the final decade of Sikh rule, was confirmed in the post-annexation period. With it came a different format for portraiture, and it is this format which constitutes the first of the three changes.

The change in format involves the grouping of famous figures, either as a single integrated group or as sets comprising a series of small individual portraits. The former gave prominence to a particular person (the current ruler or British administrator), associating with him others who enjoyed eminence in his service.[32] The latter separated the various individuals but associated them as a set, commonly mounting them together. Typically, these individual portraits were oval-shaped and many of them were executed on ivory. Such sets proved to be popular amongst the newly-arrived British and were obviously produced for this market.[33] Prominent amongst the subjects were Ranjit Singh and his subordinates, an assemblage which Archer calls 'Heroes of the Sikhs'. Quaint figures such as

yogis and nihangs also proved to be saleable subjects, and likewise famous monuments of the Punjab and North India.[34]

A second development encouraged by European example and British demand was the stronger sense of perspective which becomes evident during the post-annexation period. Schoefft's massive oils and Emily Eden's delicate drawings both set clear examples of effective perspective and presumably served as models in this respect.[35] Although much of the work produced during the latter half of the nineteenth century remains rudimentary in terms of perspective, it is evident that efforts to develop the technique were being made.

The third recognizable change was a paling of the vivid Punjabi colours as gouache gave way to water-colour and sketching.[36] This development was clearly a response to explicit British preferences and was encouraged by the Mayo School of Art, established in Lahore in 1875. A part of the demand serviced by the new style derived from the curiosity interest which later generations satisfied with cameras. Many of the British employed in India wished to record interesting people or scenes for relatives and friends at home. Sketches and water-colours, executed in acceptably European styles, met this need to some extent.

Sikh artists certainly participated in these developments and learnt at least some of the lessons proffered by the foreigners. A notable example was Kehar Singh who, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, skilfully employed the new techniques in Lahore, Amritsar and Kapurthala.[37] Although much of this output scarcely constitutes 'Sikh' art, there can be no doubt that popular Sikh art did respond directly to influences which derived from the British presence. The fashionable ivories may have been produced for foreigners with alien tastes, but the change in format which they represented certainly affected popular art, and so too did the techniques of perspective and water-colouring.

New technology introduced by the British ensured that this blend of native and exotic traditions reached a much larger market than had hitherto been the case. The printing press, so important as an agent of renewed Sikh consciousness in the late nineteenth century, also contributed significantly to the distribution of Sikh art. A convention, hitherto reserved to a small elite, became the property of all who could afford a few annas. However crude and ephemeral the results may have been, neither

feature can diminish their true importance. They must be seen as an aspect of the resurgent Sikh consciousness, one which directly affected a much larger group than the new literate elite which promoted the journalism and the literary efforts of the Singh Sabha movement.[38]

The actual technology utilized by the vendors of popular Sikh art included both lithography and woodcuts. Janam-sakhis copied in Gurmukhi for reproduction by lithography were interspersed with appropriate illustrations; and individual pictures were produced as woodcuts for letter-press reproduction and distribution as individual prints. A comparison with the illustrations painted in manuscript janam-sakhis will easily give the impression that the new techniques of mass production have produced a grievous debasing of the earlier style. This is undoubtedly correct, but it overlooks a fundamental point. Although the authentically Sikh art of the manuscript janam-sakhis may have generally lacked royal or aristocratic patronage, it was nevertheless an elite product, one which necessarily required its own form of patronage. The popular Sikh art of the late nineteenth century is by contrast genuinely popular. If art requires subtlety and elegance, the lithographs and woodcuts of the late nineteenth century must be instantly disqualified. If, however, we can include visual representations of widely-held beliefs and well-loved stories they certainly deserve consideration.

As easily-comprehended visual presenters of Sikh tradition, the embarrassingly crude yet wholly fascinating woodcuts communicated with a far larger sector of the Sikh community than the elite products, whether fashionable portrait or illustrated janam-sakhi manuscript. They communicated with those Sikhs whose access to the tradition was otherwise limited to oral report in the home and the gurdwara. In this sense, as in their actual style and content, the woodcuts of the late nineteenth century are the direct antecedents of the highly-coloured bazaar prints of today. The individual prints are easily recognized as the forerunners of today's multi-coloured article. As such, they serve the same function for the student of Sikh tradition, though necessarily limited by the small number and random coverage of those which survive. In seeking to attract a popular market they inevitably reflect in their choice of subjects and symbols popular views of Sikh tradition as opposed to the more refined version promulgated in documentary form by the Singh Sabha reformers.

In terms of format the Anglo-Mughal style had a clear and direct influence on popular Sikh art. Both the integrated group and the set of separate portraits are taken as direct models, the two styles soon blending to form a distinctive design which survives to the present day. The latter style is represented by woodcuts depicting the Twelve Heroes of the Sikhs, each represented as a head-and-shoulders portrait surrounded by an oval frame (figure 4) or as figures seated on oval rugs (figure 5). Ranjit Singh dominates each set, flanked on either side by his sons Sher Singh and Dalip Singh.[39] The Maharaja also dominates one of the surviving examples of an integrated group executed as a woodcut (figure 2). This shows him nimbate, surrounded by members of his court. Each royal member of the entourage sits on a chair with legs crossed and one foot resting on a cane stool (*mūṛhā*). Ranjit Singh, fanned by an attendant, fondly caresses the child Dalip Singh.[40]

The integrated group is particularly interesting in that the same artist (or one with a very similar style) produced a matching group which comprises the ten Gurus (figure 3). This matching woodcut replicates the oval frame and peripheral decoration of the Ranjit Singh group. The same marble parapet serves as a threshold to the hallowed space where a nimbate Nanak sits surrounded by his nine successors, his two attendants (Mardana and Bala) and an unidentified figure beside a horse.[41] Guru Nanak himself sits supported by the traditional cushion (takia) on an elevated platform (*chaukī*), while the others in the assemblage kneel or sit on a carpet. The takia and chauki represent authority (both royal and spiritual) as does an overspreading tree (a version of the royal *chhatrī* or umbrella). In the centre of the carpet a cloth covering conceals a bowl or tray of sacred food (*kaṛāh prasād*); and immediately behind Guru Nanak an open copy of the Guru Granth Sahib sits on a portable lectern. From the tree hangs a cage containing a parrot, a feature associated with yogis of the Nath tradition.

Needless to say, no such gathering could ever have taken place, for the life-spans of the ten Gurus extend over much more than two centuries. It is (to use Archer's expressive term) a 'timeless conclave'. The same may also be said of Ranjit Singh's assembly in that it too telescopes time and space in order to bring its various members together. There can be no doubt that the Ranjit Singh assembly derives from earlier courtly models

such as the strikingly similar painting of Maharaja Dalip Singh executed by Hasan-al-din or an imitator in *c.* 1843.[42] The halo, the marble frame, and the disposition of the assembled group make this relationship abundantly clear. The transition is thus established from courtly painting in the Anglo-Mughal style to popular woodcut; and the striking resemblance linking the Ranjit Singh woodcut with the Gurus' conclave adapts the style to a new purpose within the context of popular Sikh art. A visual representation of the one divine Guru in ten successive bodies is thereby achieved, an intention further emphasized by the visible presence of the Guru Granth Sahib and the sacred karah prasad.

The convention thus established by copying one courtly format was soon to be converted into a much more durable image by combining both Anglo-Mughal formats. If one compares figure 6 with figures 2 and 5 the nature of the change can be easily recognized. The ten Gurus remain in conclave, with Guru Nanak's two companions still in attendance, but each has been set apart on his own individual mat. The various figures are at once separated as individual portraits yet integrated as a single assembly. The format thus established was to prove very popular, particularly during the decades covering the turn of the century. The most famous of all examples was probably the miniature version painted by Bhai Puran Singh of Amritsar in 1890, now held by the Chandigarh Museum.[43]

Eventually the format was to undergo a further change, one which drew it further from the integrated group and much closer to the set of individual portraits. This has occurred in comparatively recent times, producing the stock 'Ten Gurus' picture. In this standard modern version the Gurus are reduced to head-and-shoulders portraits, each of them isolated within an ornamented frame (frontispiece and figure 24). The result is, in effect, a reappearance after almost a century of the format preferred by the post-annexation British clientele.

For the sequence which so clearly establishes this development we must bless the memory of J. Lockwood Kipling, Principal of the Mayo School of Art in Lahore (1875-93) and also Curator of the Central Museum. Indeed, we must be grateful to him and to his son Rudyard for the much larger collection now held by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. This comprises an album containing 196 prints, paintings and drawings in pen and pencil, together with thirty-seven loose pages of

paintings, calligraphic drawings and outline pen drawings. Most items are individual prints, produced in such places as Lahore and sold in the bazaars and religious fairs of North India. The collection was made by Lockwood Kipling during his years in Lahore and was presented to the Victoria and Albert Museum by his son in 1917. The principal value of the collection is the essentially ephemeral nature of most items. Such items, once so easily obtained, are now exceedingly rare precisely because they were once so common, so cheap and (to most collectors) so distinctly unrefined. Inevitably we are reminded of the principal purpose of the present book, the need to ensure that the bazaar prints of the late twentieth century do not suffer the fate of their predecessors.[44]

Each of the items included in the Lockwood Kipling collection has been catalogued by the Victoria and Albert Museum as I. M. 2(   )-1917, with the serial number for each individual item inserted within the parentheses. In the following list each item is preceded by its serial number. The first item in the list (the 'timeless conclave' of Gurus discussed above) is thus catalogued as I.M.2(11)-1917. The items of particular interest for a study of popular Sikh art are the following:

11 The ten Gurus with Mardana, Bala and a figure seated beside a horse. Figure 3.
16 Ranjit Singh with courtiers. Figure 2.
21 Guru Gobind Singh hunting. Figure 11.
23 Scenes from a fair (*melā*) near Amritsar.
26 Bhagat Kabir and his wife (central panel).
29 Pictures of courtesans.
30 The story of a *sant* (Dhanna the Bhagat).
33 Guru Nanak hearing *kīrtan* in the presence of his two sons, four attendants and Bhai Salo. Figure 10.
36 Guru Nanak with Mardana and Bala (upper panel).
38 A scene from the *Bālā* janam-sakhi tradition: Guru Nanak accompanied by Mardana and Bala riding on a monster fish (lower panel).
39 Flying kites.
40 Guru Nanak discoursing with Gorakhnath and other Siddhs. Figure 9.
43 Scenes from the life of Bhagat Namdev.

47 Twelve heroes of the Sikhs. Figure 5.
49 Sikh family paying homage at the shrine of Baba Atal Rai, Amritsar (left panel). Figure 14.
50 The Golden Temple. Figure 13.
56 Twelve heroes of the Sikhs (coloured woodcut).
59 Bhagat Kabir and his wife (water-colour).
63 Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
68 Guru Nanak with Mardana and Bala (water-colour).
87 Panoramic view of Lahore from the north, with Maharaja Ranjit Singh and attendants in foreground (coloured woodcut). Figure 1.
88 The Ten Gurus. Figure 6.
119 Twelve heroes of the Sikhs. Figure 4.
120 Panoramic view of the Golden Temple (coloured woodcut).
121 Panoramic view of Lahore from the north, with Maharaja Ranjit Singh and attendants in foreground (coloured woodcut).
125 Guru Nanak with Mardana and Bala (coloured woodcut). Figure 8.
128 Guru Gobind Singh on horseback (coloured woodcut).
133 Guru Gobind Singh hunting.
136 Ranjit Singh on horseback.
137 A Nihang Singh.
145 Sikhs making offerings at the Baba Atal Rai shrine.
146 Bhagat Namdev revivifies a dead cow.
148 Bhagat Namdev.
151 A battle between Punjabi and European troops.
153 A view of the Golden Temple.
154 Guru Nanak discoursing with Siddhs.
161 Guru Nanak with Mardana and Bala in Mecca (partly-coloured woodcut). Figure 7.
179 Guru Gobind Singh initiating the first five members of the Khalsa. Figure 12.

The printer responsible for many of these prints has helpfully supplied publication details on his work. Bhai Gujjar Singh, proprietor of the Faiz Printing Press near Akal Banga in Amritsar, provided each of his woodcuts a title, the date of publication and the number of copies actually

printed. For example, items 21 and 33 (figures 11 and 10) were both issued on 24 Chetra S. 1931 (AD 1874) with editions of 2000 each. Item 50 (figure 13), published five days later, had an edition of 2100. No date is given for item 49 (figure 14), but an edition of 1000 is noted.

The various items listed above may be classified in terms of subject as follows:

The Ten Gurus in conclave	11	88				
Guru Nanak						
With Mardana and Bala	36	68	125			
Scenes from the janam-sakhis	33	38	40	154	161	
Guru Gobind Singh	21	128	133	179		
Bhagats of the *Ādi Granth*	26	30	43	59	146	148
The Golden Temple and adjacent shrine of Baba Atal Rai	48	50	120	145	153	
Maharaja Ranjit Singh	16	63	87	121	136	
The Twelve Heroes of the Sikhs	47	58	119			
Other military subjects	137	151				
Scenes from contemporary society	23	29	39			

Thirty-one illustrations from a single collection do not constitute a sufficient sample. We can assume, however, that Lockwood Kipling did not purchase his collection at random and that the prints which he acquired probably offer a reasonably representative choice from the ephemera available in the earliest years of Punjabi printing. The list offers two surprises. One is the interest shown in the Adi Granth *bhagats*. This may be in part due to the fact that the bhagats would not be viewed as the exclusive property of the Sikhs. The other surprise is the complete absence of all the Gurus between the first and the last, apart from their appearance in the two conclave prints. The second of these surprises is, however, a mild one in view of the strong concentration on Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh in modern bazaar prints. Modern prints no doubt feature Guru Ram Das to some extent, but only in connection with the Golden Temple. The nineteenth-century woodcuts met this same interest by supplying pictures of the Golden Temple itself (figure 13).

An obvious conclusion to be drawn from this selection and from other

surviving evidence is that Guru Nanak retains his pre-eminence in the popular understanding of Sikh tradition. This is indicated both by the frequency with which he appears as a subject and by his dominance within the conclave prints. In the conclave setting he occupies the upper central position and commonly he alone is portrayed full-face, the remaining Gurus being shown in profile. The only other Guru to command significant attention is Gobind Singh. As one would expect, the two Gurus are portrayed in radically different ways, testifying to the differing roles which each discharges in Sikh tradition.

In the popular art of the period Guru Nanak is the pious and revered teacher, usually represented as an old man (symbolizing wisdom) dressed in a garb appropriate to his spiritual vocation. His typical position is the seated posture of the religious preceptor and the various artifacts which surround him serve to reinforce this identity. The spiritual nature of his role is expressed by prayer-beads held in the hand as a rosary (mala); the cord around his neck (seli); by his loose robe (jama) and shawl (chaddar); by the domed crown-like cap (mukat) which he invariably wears; by the presence of the sacred scripture and karah prasad; and by Mardana's attendance as accompanist for kirtan. Some features stress the renunciant aspect of his pious life-style. These include wooden clogs, the yogi's crutch (bairagan) and water-pot (*loṭā*), and a caged parrot.[45] Authority is symbolized by a carpet or pedestal ('throne', *takhat*), the cylindrical cushion (takia), the *chaurī* wielded by Bhai Bala and the umbrella-shaped tree representing the royal chhatri. In some instances supremacy is stressed and probably divinized by the addition of a halo. Baba Nanak is also Guru Nanak Dev ('Dev' means 'God' or a deity).

Others who appear in his presence are distinguished by their manifest deference. Those who stand are either approaching with reverence or engaged in acts of service. Those who sit are gathered around the Master in positions which clearly signal their subordinate rank. Exceptions to these rules are allowed only when they serve the same ultimate purpose. The Muslim qazi in figure 7 engages in a disrespectful act only as a well-known preliminary to his own humiliation.

Guru Nanak is thus represented as a dignified old man (*bābā*), the source of spiritual wisdom and personal peace. Guru Gobind Singh, by contrast, is a young man of action, equipped as a warrior and mounted on

a galloping horse. If not on horseback he sits fully armed on a royal throne, complete with takia and chhatri. In place of the first Guru's mukat he wears a turban with a kingly plume. This plainly is the Lord of the Khalsa, a message which is reinforced by a print (figure 12) depicting the first initiation ceremony (*amrit sanskār*).

Together with the conclave prints, the drawings of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh clearly communicate the popular understanding of the Gurus. There is indeed a succession of ten Gurus and each Guru within the succession can be easily identified. Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, however, occupy positions of particular prominence, each of them symbolizing a distinctive aspect of the Panth's inheritance and continuing tradition. Most conspicuous of all is Baba Nanak, Founder of the Panth and supremely wise Teacher, who humbles the proud and enlightens the devout. The Gurus who are assembled in his presence as a conclave are portrayed in a manner which indicates their changing policies and practice (figures 3 and 6). The next four Gurus in the succession replicate the style of the first Master, appearing in garments appropriate to a religious teacher and in some instances holding a rosary. With the sixth Guru a change becomes evident. To the same basic garb are added a shield and the twin swords of *mīrī* and *pīrī*; [46] and in place of the rosary there appears on Guru Hargobind's hand a falcon (another symbol of armed militancy). The next three Gurus revert to the basic garb and rosary, indicating that the need for militancy had temporarily receded. With Guru Gobind Singh the need reappears and with it the sword, shield and falcon. For Bhai Puran Singh three of the Gurus command a particular reverence as Guru Hargobind joins Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh in receiving a halo.

In terms of frequency and general prominence the position of Guru Gobind Singh is firmly established. To the themes of peace and devotion symbolized by Guru Nanak, he adds the themes of vigour and warfare. Together the two sets of themes, graphically symbolized by the rosary and the falcon, constitute the fundamentals of Sikh tradition in the popular understanding of the time. Mughal hostility supplies the link connecting the two. The sixth Guru, Hargobind, represents with miri and piri the actual turning-point.

The pre-eminence of Guru Nanak is further emphasized when account

is taken of other examples of popular Sikh art surviving from the later nineteenth century. One of the notable beneficiaries of the new printing press was the janam-sakhi and, thanks to the new technology, the last three decades of the century proved to be its period of greatest expansion. This particularly affected the *Bālā* janam-sakhi tradition which, between 1870 and 1890, rapidly grew from a work of moderate length to a distinctly bulky product. The janam-sakhi known as the *Gyān-ratanāvalī* similarly underwent a process of substantial growth, much of it achieved by importing large quantities of *Bālā* material.[47]

Several of these lithographed janam-sakhis were illustrated, a process which greatly increased the attention devoted by popular artists to Guru Nanak. As in the individual woodcut prints, the results were usually crude. The message, however, was reinforced. As a child Nanak displays manifest signs of divine favour. As an adult Baba Nanak rebukes the arrogant, instructs the ignorant, corrects the misguided and counsels the sincere. When need arises (which is frequently the case) he performs a miracle to make his point clear. The janam-sakhi illustrators, for all their naivety, support the text very effectively.

Baba Nanak also dominates the Sikh murals of the period, the supreme example being the fascinating sequence painted on the walls of the Baba Atal Rai Gurdwara, adjacent to the Golden Temple in Amritsar. These murals, said to have been the work of Mehtab Singh, were evidently executed in the last decade of the nineteenth century.[48] Spread around the walls of the shrine's first storey, they originally constituted a complete janam-sakhi, and although many of the panels have been damaged or destroyed forty-two still survive. Each panel depicts a separate anecdote, most of them set in interlinked frames and separated from their neighbours by floral borders. Those which are easily recognized include only brief inscriptions. Others are accompanied by a complete janam-sakhi text, executed in bold, easily-read Gurmukhi script. A supplementary sequence represents martyrs of the Panth.[49]

The Nanak iconography of the Baba Atal Rai murals, so vastly superior in terms of movement and detail, generally accords with that of the woodcuts and lithographed janam-sakhis. Baba Nanak wears the same jama, chaddar and mukat (or a turban strongly resembling a mukat); and he travels equipped with rosary, crutch and halo. When he sits he does so

on the usual mat, supported by a takia and commonly shadowed by the regal tree. His appearance undergoes appropriate changes as the sequence of pictures leads from childhood through adulthood to venerable grey-bearded old age. Although the last stage achieves a dignity which far transcends the bazaar version it retains essentially the same style.

The style in which his surroundings and companions are depicted offers clear signs of earlier courtly influence and occasional hints of new directions. The influence of the former is particularly evident in the vegetation which commonly serves as background and in most of the figures who associate with the Guru or who reverently crowd around him for *darśan*. The need for perspective has meanwhile been grasped, although the contours of the gurdwara wall frequently distort it. Hints of change appear in buildings which show some resemblance to gurdwaras and to occasional turbans which reflect contemporary Sikh styles rather than those of the Mughals. Guru Nanak himself subtly represents this change as his mukat imperceptibly changes into a turban of very similar shape.

The murals in the Baba Atal Rai Gurdwara are a rare treasure, the finest example of popular Sikh art to survive from the late nineteenth century. Unfortunately they no longer survive in their original form. In 1971–2 the entire area was repainted in bright colours, transforming the originals into something deemed preferable by the dominant modern taste. The tragedy involved in this 'restoration' is further aggravated by the fact that the murals were seldom photographed in colour prior to the repainting.[50]

The first half of the twentieth century

There is little which can be said of popular Sikh art during the half-century which precedes the conclusion of World War II and the emergence of independent India. Indeed, there is little that can be said of any Sikh art, except perhaps the embellishing of gurdwaras. Even this, however, belongs more to the nineteenth century and post-independence twentieth century than to the intervening decades. The one figure of importance to appear during this period was a Sikh artist in only a highly qualified sense. Amrita Sher-gil (1911-41) was certainly an artist of considerable talent, but her work is neither 'popular' nor 'Sikh' and as such does not belong to a survey of this kind.[51]

Two reasons may be held to explain the apparent barrenness of this period. The first is the general disfavour with which members of the Singh Sabha movement regarded popular pictorial art, or indeed pictorial art of any kind. Calligraphy and gurdwara design might be acceptable art forms and photographs of actual people or places serve a valid purpose. Imaginative painting or drawing, however, was distinctly suspect. This attitude is well represented by that ornament of the Singh Sabha movement, Kahn Singh's magisterial *Mahān Kośı*. Of the encyclopaedia's eighty-one illustrations fifty-eight are photographs and seventeen are maps. Nowhere in the collection are representations of the Gurus to be found.[52]

Kahn Singh elsewhere explains his unwillingness to sanction pictures of the Gurus. As he rightly claims, there exists no authentic picture of any of the Gurus. We do not know what any of them looked like, and efforts to represent them in pictorial form must necessarily be products of each artist's preconceptions and imagination. The pictures which do exist, he continues, are manifestly unhistorical and, typically, they transgress the Gurus' teachings. This they do by incorporating foolish anachronisms and by clothing the Gurus in a bejewelled finery which they themselves would surely have spurned. An assembly of learned historians and talented artists might jointly devise portraits which accurately communicate the Gurus' spiritual qualities. All existing portraits, however, must be rejected.[53]

The example and justification offered by Kahn Singh implies a suspicion of pictorial art which involves more than mere inaccuracy. Art can be justified on other grounds (as a later generation was to affirm) and the typical Singh Sabha avoidance of its products must surely have had deeper causes than those enunciated by Kahn Singh Nabha. At one level it may have been the natural embarrassment experienced by a cultured Sikh when confronted by the apparent crudity of popular bazaar art. Another possibility is the anti-iconic influence of Muslim example, an aversion already embedded in Sikh tradition and now implicitly contrasted with the supposed absurdities of popular Hindu art. This would be a natural view for loyal Singh Sabha adherents to adopt, for the sense of Sikh identity so strongly asserted by some of its leaders necessarily involved a conscious separation from Hindu tradition. It was the same Kahn Singh who in 1898 had published *Ham Hindū Nahīn* ('We are not Hindus').[54]

The basic reason, however, was probably the insistence which the Sikh

scriptures lay on the formless nature of Akal Purakh. An important scriptural epithet is *Niraṅkār*, the 'Formless One'; and as God is without form or material substance so too is the eternal Guru in whom he speaks. Plainly, no orthodox Sikh would want to deny that the eternal Guru took physical form in the actual bodies of Nanak and his successors, with the patently obvious result that there were once ten actual men to be seen in the flesh. Each, however, partook of the divine nature of Nirankar and the attempt to represent any of the Gurus pictorially must inevitably fail to reveal his essential divinity.

This suspicion of pictorial representations of the Gurus may possibly have been reinforced by a fear that such pictures could easily be used as icons in gurdwaras. (The same fear ensures an even stronger hostility to sculptured forms which might come to be regarded as idols.) We are moving now into the realm of speculation, but such suggestions are at least plausible. Pictures of the Gurus were certainly regarded with suspicion within the Singh Sabha movement and doubts of this kind obviously had their causes.

Although the hostility (latent or explicit) of reformist leaders evidently slowed the output of popular Sikh art, it did not stop it. The same hostility may well have contributed to a second reason for the paucity of surviving examples from the earlier decades of the twentieth century. No one, it seems, believed that ephemeral art of this kind was worth preserving. No Lockwood Kipling emerged during these years and the educated Sikhs who ensured that approved books were preserved in libraries were not the men to share his interest in conserving bazaar art. Nurtured in the Singh Sabha tradition they were more likely to be unimpressed or even offended by it. Only in places removed from the Punjab and from the direct influence of the Singh Sabha movement (notably in the two isolated Sikh centres of Patna and Nander) was this kind of art likely to receive any encouragement.

It is thus very difficult to estimate the range and popularity of the Sikh bazaar print during the first half of the twentieth century, or even of the inexpensive book which might have included illustrations of the same kind. The earlier themes evidently remained dominant (the timeless conclave of Gurus, the pre-eminence of Guru Nanak and the everlasting attraction of Guru Gobind Singh) and likewise the established

iconography. Reproduction techniques also improved. The period of widespread popularity was, however, still ahead. It comes with India's independence and with the post-war technology which became available during the early years of independence.

The post-war independence period

The years since 1947 are distinguished by two developments in Sikh art. One is the voluminous production of the genuinely mass-produced bazaar print to which we shall return. The other is the emergence of a group of Sikh artists, seeking to express their Sikh tradition in modes which appeal to a more sophisticated audience. In some instances these were men whose formative years pre-dated 1947. Their popularity, however, is a later development.

The artists who appeal to a more sophisticated audience endeavour to apply the theory sceptically enunciated by Kahn Singh Nabha. Whereas Kahn Singh evidently believed that the theory could not be fulfilled in practice, these artists obviously take a more optimistic view. Those who specialize in imaginative portraits of the Gurus seek to express the distinctively spiritual qualities which they associate with their subjects. Accepting that their actual appearances have been lost beyond recall, they utilize a refined version of the traditional iconography to project an interpretation of the psyche and distinctive contribution of the Gurus. Others concentrate on particular events in Sikh history, attempting thereby to express themes and ideals which command importance in Sikh tradition. Sobha Singh (d. 1986) is unquestionably the doyen of the former. Kirpal Singh is the best-known of the latter.[55]

Sobha Singh and others who specialize in imaginative portraiture sustain the traditional emphasis on the first and last Gurus. In the case of Guru Nanak the intended impression is apparently one which expresses spiritual wisdom, the subdued ecstasy of deep meditation, the glow of an enlightenment transcending this earthly existence. Guru Gobind Singh, by traditional contrast, is the mighty man of action, decked in royal array and armed with weapons which he wields in defence of righteousness. In essence, Sobha Singh projects precisely the same messages as his infinitely cruder bazaar predecessors and contemporaries. He differs only in the

quality of his technique, a technique which has attracted a different clientele from the purchasers of cheap prints. This distinguishes him from the bazaar artist without severing the link which connects them. Sobha Singh has proved irresistibly attractive to the mass-production artist and his work has been widely copied.

Kirpal Singh has also painted pictures of the Gurus, but these are typically scenes from their life-stories rather than spirit-imbued portraits. Later Sikh history, particularly the stirring struggles of the eighteenth century, figure more prominently in his work. The dominant intention is evidently to express in pictorial form the traditional Khalsa ideals of heroism, unswerving loyalty and martyrdom. This constitutes an easily-comprehended message and Kirpal Singh's vivid canvases attract an audience ranging over a broad spectrum of sophistication. Villagers gaze in appreciative wonder at his paintings, reproductions appear in a wide range of publications and at least one university has purchased examples of his work.

Neither Sobha Singh nor Kirpal Singh is likely to prove popular to a Western audience. The spiritual emphasis of the former easily cloys and the fierce vigour of the latter may seem to lack subtlety. There can be no doubt, however, that they and others like them have made pictorial art much more respectable within the Sikh community. This they have done without surrendering their larger popularity. They belong to Sikh homes and gurdwaras as well as to museums and art galleries. As such they certainly deserve a place in a survey of popular Sikh art, particularly in the case of Sobha Singh.

In recent decades popular Sikh art has meant pre-eminently the mass-produced bazaar print in all its florid colour and decoration. The bazaar print sustains the mode first established in the late nineteenth century, continuing the iconographic tradition which dates from the earliest of the janam-sakhis. Much of the published output is now distributed on the complimentary calendars which small businesses issue annually to their customers, but these calendars merely replicate the poster prints. Posters without calendars are still a conspicuous item in today's market. It is this continuing form of popular art with which we are primarily concerned and to its detailed description we now turn.

2. The Modern Bazaar Print

The antecedents of the modern bazaar print

As we have already observed, the modern bazaar print featuring Sikh objects is demonstrably a lineal descendant of the illustrated janam-sakhi and the woodcut posters of the late nineteenth century. It stands firmly within an established succession and for its antecedents we must look to the popular Sikh art of earlier periods. The first chapter sketched the development and principal features of this antecedent tradition, the lineage from which the modern product descends.

Having thus acknowledged the principal source for the Sikh bazaar print of today we must add three other influences which contribute to its style and format. One of these, already noted above, is arguably an aspect of the earlier model. There can be no doubt that the designers of today's prints owe a direct and substantial debt to artists such as Sobha Singh. As we have already suggested, however, these artists actually stand within the same tradition and the forms which they supply typically represent features which derive from the earlier expression of that tradition.

To some extent the same can also be said of features which derive from exotic sources. Foreign influence, already evident in the late nineteenth-century prints, carries through to their late twentieth-century successors. There are nevertheless forms and artifacts which represent a more recent borrowing process. The new-born Nanak child, for example, commonly bears a marked resemblance to the baby Jesus in his mother's arms. Guru Gobind Singh sometimes wears a uniform of distinctly European origin and rides a horse with trappings which seem to have been obtained from the same supplier. Occasionally the actual source can be recognized. A

popular print showing the tenth Guru at prayer is instantly identifiable as Hofman's Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The question of antecedents is in fact a complex one, for European models are also mediated through the third of the influences moulding the native Punjabi style. This third influence, the most conspicuous of all, is the Hindu bazaar print. Prints relating to the two traditions, Hindu and Sikh, need only be placed side by side for the similarities to be immediately evident. Indeed, so obvious are the resemblances that one might be tempted to regard the Sikh operation as a subsidiary of the parent Hindu industry, and in a strictly production sense this conclusion is wholly justified. The printing process is the same; the same publishers produce for both markets; and the same artist may well be employed on designs intended for either one or the other. Many of the prints portraying essentially Sikh subjects are obviously purchased by Hindu customers and, on occasion, the image of Guru Nanak is so Hinduized that one must assume a predominantly Hindu market. Figure 28, for example, though easily recognizable nevertheless resembles a Hindu *rishi* as much as the Baba Nanak of traditional Sikh iconography.

This may all be acknowledged without implying that there is no distinctively Sikh segment of the bazaar print industry. Both claims are true. There is indeed a separate Sikh sector, one which develops within its own established tradition; and there is plainly a close connection with the vastly larger Hindu industry. The same publishers include both within the same mass-produced printing and distribution operation, and conventions established by the larger interest inevitably influence the smaller. In passing we may note that the same publishers also deal in film-star publicity, Muslim 'scenery' and the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

According to Professor A. L. Basham, the earliest examples of this popular Hindu art were printed in South Germany by firms which also produced Roman Catholic pictures. The actual printing of coloured pictures was begun in India well before World War II (probably before World War I), introducing stronger folk elements and sharper colour contrasts in the process. A third phase 'at once more imaginative and voluptuous' has, he suggests, overtaken the industry in more recent years.[56]

The Sikh posters currently on sale and represented in this book

correspond to the second of these phases rather than the third. Whereas they certainly possess what Professor Basham euphemistically calls sharper colour contrasts they lack the voluptuous film-star quality of the latest phase. The few women who appear in Sikh posters are certainly not Bombay studio heroines, nor are the men plump replicas of their male counterparts. The venerable Nanak and the martial Gobind Singh still dominate prints intended for Sikh customers. There is, however, a noticeable decline in vitality since the nineteenth century and this should probably be traced to the Hindu poster tradition. No longer does the tenth Guru gallop headlong after his prey (figure 11). Even he, the mighty warrior, has become static. Although he still carries his weapons he seldom shows any sign of using them.

A description of the modern bazaar print

Our description of the modern bazaar print can be brief because the actual examples which accompany the text supply most of what is needed in this respect. The line is simple, features are immobile and bodies stiffly resemble cardboard models rather than real people. Much the most prominent features of the prints are their colours and ornamentation. The colouring is gaudy (a result of the artists' deliberately heavy dependence on the primary colours) and the ornamentation garishly ostentatious. Although the latter feature is not present in all prints the artist usually succumbs to its meretricious charms, surrounding his principal subjects with golden frames or wreaths of flowers. In Sikh prints the *ik-oṅkār* symbol (ੴ) and the modern Khalsa emblem (☬) are extensively used for the same purpose, the former typically set within a burst of light. Stylized Gurmukhi also serves the dual purpose of symbol and ornamentation, crowning or buttressing the Gurus with appropriate mantras or scriptural texts.

Clothing, needless to say, provides each artist with abundant scope for both colour and ornamentation. This particularly applies to the kingly Guru Gobind Singh who frequently appears in resplendent attire. Decked with jewels, richly embroidered, and armed with an ostentatious sword he answers an insistent demand for conspicuous display. (See, for example, figure 39.) Guru Ram Das has likewise attracted a spectacular

magnificence in a popular print, one which is frequently reproduced (figure 32). Even the ascetic Nanak can be attired in a splash of colour. This can be achieved either by clothing him in a striking saffron or by highlighting his patched shawl. Sometimes both techniques are used (figure 18).

Carpets, drapes and furnishings likewise attract bright colours; and the Guru Granth Sahib proves to be no exception. In bazaar prints (as in many gurdwaras) the canopy and wrapping (*rumāl*) of the sacred volume provide a vivid cluster of tinsel, garlands and coloured cloth. When Guru Gobind Singh is mounted, his richly caparisoned horse reflects his glory (figure 38), and likewise the occasional elephant which he acquires (figure 40). Even the countryside, with its vivid crops and romantic surroundings, shares in the feast of colour (figures 23 and 33).

Blue and saffron happen to be traditional for the Sikhs, with the result that two of the primary colours commonly dominate a poster. Red is, however, used with abandon and bright greens are also very popular (figure 53). Depending on one's point of view, the result is stunningly splendid, naively gorgeous, or absurdly gross. Readers who are attracted to the third of these options may need to be reminded that we are dealing with folk-art and that the colouring as well as the actual subjects can communicate an important range of insights to the alert observer. Subtle colours can express inhibition as well as sophistication; and the accusations of gaudiness may in some measure be the verdict of the fettered on the free. Whatever else it may be, Punjabi culture (particularly its rural expression) is distinctly extrovert. Baden-Powell was one of the few foreigners to acknowledge this. The Punjabi, he wrote in his 1864 survey of native arts and crafts, 'has an instinctive appreciation of colour. . . . His colour is often exaggerated but it is always warm and rich and fearless'.[57]

The subjects

In one respect the modern bazaar print continues an emphasis established in the late nineteenth century and sustained ever since. A survey of the recent output will quickly confirm that the earlier concentration on the first and tenth Gurus remains a conspicuous feature. Today, as in the past, Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh dominate the popular art of

the Sikhs. The modern version of the genre thus sustains the traditional pairing of spiritual and activist ideals, maintaining the same dual emphasis on peace-giving meditation (symbolized by Baba Nanak) and martial fervour (represented in the popular image of Guru Gobind Singh).

There are, however, two shifts of emphasis which can be detected within this continuing tradition. The first concerns the relative status of the two Gurus. Although Guru Nanak still retains his pre-eminence the tilt in his direction is not as pronounced as it used to be. Prints devoted exclusively to Guru Gobind Singh have become very common, and in some illustrations showing them both the tenth Guru's prominence approaches that of the first (see the frontispiece). It is, however, a perceptible tendency rather than a strong surge. Guru Nanak still retains his predominance in terms of size and placement (figure 24) as well as in the relative number of prints.

The second shift of emphasis with regard to the portrayal of the Gurus is more obvious. Whereas the first and tenth Gurus previously occupied practically all the space (apart from the timeless conclave depicting all ten Gurus) now there are several prints which focus on the contribution of intermediate Gurus. The range of choice and emphasis is interesting. Third in terms of frequency is not Guru Hargobind, as one might have expected from earlier hints. Third place evidently belongs to the fourth Guru, Ram Das. The reason for this relative prominence is easily identified, a reason which carries forward another of the earlier themes. As we have already seen, the Golden Temple attracted a share of the market in the late nineteenth century. This share it retains and, because Guru Ram Das is particularly associated with the founding of Sri Harimandir (the present Golden Temple), his presence in modern prints can be regarded as a natural development. Invariably he is associated with the Golden Temple (figures 31 and 32).

In spite of the Harimandir association, the relative prominence of Guru Ram Das is perhaps surprising when one recollects the undoubted importance of Guru Arjan in Sikh tradition. It was, after all, the latter who was responsible for compiling the supremely revered sacred scripture, a contribution which was subsequently reinforced by his martyrdom. Given the central significance of the *Ādi Granth* in Sikh tradition and contemporary practice one might have expected Guru Arjan to command

a substantially larger share of the available space. Indeed, the appearance of the Guru Granth Sahib itself is much less common than might be expected, and when it does appear it is typically associated with either Guru Nanak or the full assembly of Gurus (figures 24–26). The comparative scarcity of Guru Arjan prints and the actual incidence of the Guru Granth Sahib may contain a message. The place of the scriptures in the popular awareness may not be quite as prominent as we have been led to believe.

Other Gurus who attract limited attention are the third, sixth, eighth and ninth (Guru Amar Das, Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Krishan and Guru Tegh Bahadur). This leaves two (Guru Angad and Guru Har Rai) completely unrepresented, apart from the 'Ten Gurus' prints and (in the case of Guru Angad) his subordinate association with Guru Nanak. There is obviously a pecking order in terms of popularity. Although this suggestion may be regarded as offensively impious, the actual print-count leaves room for no other conclusion. Guru Nanak ranks first; Guru Gobind Singh follows a close second; and Guru Ram Das (in association with the Golden Temple) a distant third. Fourth in frequency could be either Guru Har Krishan or Guru Tegh Bahadur, followed by a cluster comprising the third, fifth and sixth Gurus. At the end of the scale come the second and seventh Gurus, their appearances restricted to the 'Ten Gurus' prints and (for Guru Angad) his association with Guru Nanak. This ranking obviously contains another message, or rather a collection of ten separate messages.

Merely counting appearances, however, is not the only appropriate form of analysis. Actual sales also matter, and prints which sell well obviously succeed because they match current preferences and expectations. Why, for example, has a recent picture of the child Guru Har Krishan been so popular (figure 34)? It seems reasonable to conclude that the reason for its popularity is the association of Guru Har Krishan with Gurdwara Bangla Sahib in New Delhi. This particular shrine has become very popular amongst the Sikhs of New Delhi and the prominence of the Guru Har Krishan picture presumably reflects this popularity.[58]

Treatment of the Gurus thus demonstrates that the preferences of late twentieth-century consumers resemble those of a century ago in general terms but differ in emphasis and detail. Three other subject differences

deserve to be noted. One of the differences presents a curious and unexpected decline in artistic popularity. The other two, by contrast, represent significant increases in favour and attention.

The diminished subject is Maharaja Ranjit Singh, a surprising development in view of the popularity which he plainly seems to retain within the Panth. Ranjit Singh remains a highly favoured hero and one might have expected that his career would have provided abundant scope for the popular artist. There is an unexplained mystery here, for Ranjit Singh is also out of favour with the more respectable artists. Although he has certainly not vanished from bazaar posters and calendars, his appearances are significantly fewer than one might expect from earlier precedents or continuing popularity.

The possibility that this change may reflect the preferences of peace-loving printers is immediately dispelled by at least one of the two subjects which, by contrast, have increased in popularity and which figure so conspicuously in today's range. This is Baba Dip Singh, that brave soldier of the Khalsa who met his death in AD 1757, contending for possession of Sri Harimandir against overwhelming Muslim odds (figures 52 and 53). The other episode which commands notable popularity in modern prints also depicts Muslim oppression and Sikh bravery. It is, however, violence and heroism of a different kind. The execution of the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh (the *Sāhibzāde*) represents the violence of adults over children, and the heroism is the stoical patience of supremely loyal innocents (figure 46). Both incidents appear frequently in posters, calendars and a variety of modern publications. Although it would be an exaggeration to claim that Dip Singh or the Sahibzade are wholly absent from the popular Sikh art of earlier generations, there can be no doubt that the popularity of both subjects has significantly increased during the modern phase.

There are two traditions concerning Dip Singh. Both begin with the polluting occupation of Sri Harimandir by Qazi Jahan Khan and his Muslim troops during the turbulent eighteenth-century struggle for possession of the Punjab. Dip Singh swore to evict the foul transgressor or die in the precincts of the temple. His tiny army was confronted by a far larger Muslim host several kilometres from Amritsar and in the ensuing battle Dip Singh's head was cut off. Here the two traditions diverge. One

maintains that Dip Singh, holding his decapitated head in one hand, continued to battle on to Amritsar with the other. Eventually he reached the pool of Ramsar on the outskirts of the present city and there finally succumbed. The second tradition affirms that the beheaded hero, recognizing the impossibility of getting his headless trunk to distant Amritsar, hurled his severed head over the intervening distance. A hexagonal stone set in the paving surrounding the Golden Temple marks the spot where the hurled head landed.

We grievously misconstrue the significance of Baba Dip Singh if we focus our attention on the historicity of either tradition. Dip Singh's significance is symbolic and the notable popularity of his picture dramatically demonstrates the power of the symbol. There is no way of conclusively determining the comparative popularity of the various bazaar prints apparently on sale. Observation indicates, however, that G. S. Sohan Singh's picture of the decapitated but still mobile Dip Singh must certainly be ranked amongst the most popular posters. It may even be the most popular of all.

Baba Dip Singh as a symbol represents several closely-related themes. These are Khalsa loyalty, Jat bravery, militant action, resistance to oppression, and martyrdom. Dip Singh embodies all of these ideals in a single, integrated form. Here there are no inhibitions. Decked in blue armour garnished with saffron and red, the gory trunk holds a blood-stained sword in one hand and its severed head in the other (figure 53). The head itself, crowned with the Khalsa insignia, is a model of pious composure. Features associated with Guru Nanak are thus joined with those of Guru Gobind Singh, the two united in the ideal of martyrdom (*śahādat*). The emphasis, however, is conspicuously upon the militant mode. It is clear that, although this mythical version of Dip Singh succeeds in blending the Nanak and Gobind Singh images, the dominant stress is on heroism, a heroism which even the certainty of death cannot subdue. The symbol is an unusually powerful one and although the historical Dip Singh may have been a figure of only middle rank, the Dip Singh Shahid of popular art achieves a prominence surpassed only by two of the Gurus. It is no accident that the symbol attracts particular attention whenever the Panth is believed to be under serious threat from those who would oppress or demolish it.

The same circumstances also serve to magnify the Sahibzade, the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh so cruelly bricked into a wall by the Mughal governor of Sirhind.[59] At first sight the popularity of these two children may seem surprising. All four of the Guru's sons met early deaths at Mughal hands during this period. Why, then, should two of the four attract such notable attention? The heroism with which they faced death cannot be the sole reason, for the two elder sons had earlier demonstrated the same quality. Although the elder sons also attract attention they are normally shown in the company of their younger brothers (figure 41). The *chhoṭe* sahibzade, bricked to some point on their torsos, are the pair who typically appear alone (figure 46).

There are at least three elements in the traditional account of the young Sahibzade which presumably contribute to its singular popularity as a subject for pictures and narrative. One is the intrinsic interest of the story. The walling up of helpless children is horrifying yet highly dramatic. A second feature is the form of heroism which it represents. Serene loyalty to the Guru and his Panth is supremely illustrated in the trusting demeanour of the two young victims. Thirdly, there is the testimony which the story bears to the barbarous treachery of the Mughals and to the nobility of those who so fearlessly accept a martyr's death. The oppression/martyrdom theme is a powerful one in Khalsa tradition and no event illustrates it with greater power. In this respect, as in the stress on invincible bravery, it ranks with the executions of Guru Tegh Bahadur and, later, of Bhai Mani Singh. Here, however, we encounter another puzzle. Why is Mani Singh so conspicuously absent from poster and calendar art ? The same question also applies to Banda Bahadur, another of the Panth's mighty heroes in its struggles against the Mughals.

Martyrdom is the dominant feature in both the Dip Singh and the Sahibzade traditions. This, it seems, is the real secret of their enduring popularity. Both respond to current circumstances, attracting particular attention during periods when the Panth is believed to be under threat. If such pictures advance in popularity the message is presumably clear. A sense of grievance is abroad and deep-seated Khalsa ideals will be invoked to deal with it. In more settled times their popularity can be expected to recede to some extent, though never to the point of insignificance.

The Sahibzade, like the many pictures of the Gurus, are static figures. Dip Singh, however, is an exception in the relative mobility which he displays in the Sohan Singh print. A majority of prints comprise single immobile portraits, often only head and shoulders. In some examples incidents from the Guru's life or gurdwaras associated with him are presented as inserts, usually within a circular frame. Some compositions present a set of framed episodes, either a sequence illustrating a single story (figure 30) or a random selection from the life-story of a particular Guru (figures 29 and 36). In a few prints an incident occupies centre stage, though here too subordinate scenes may be represented as insets (figure 17). In the exceptional case of the Golden Temple the usual order of priorities may be reversed, the temple itself taking pride of place with the Guru occupying an elevated yet diminished space (figure 31).

The iconography of the modern bazaar print

As we have already observed, Guru Nanak retains his pre-eminence amongst the ten Gurus, even though this status has been slightly reduced by the increasing popularity of Guru Gobind Singh—a shift in emphasis which is sometimes reflected in a 'Ten Gurus' print (frontispiece). In general, however, the first Guru's pre-eminence is sustained by the frequency of his individual portrait and by his dominant position in the prints showing all the Gurus (figure 24).

The Nanak who appears in modern prints is recognizably the same figure as his nineteenth-century predecessor, but with some significant changes. With rare exceptions, his beard is invariably white and perceptibly longer than that of the earlier image. The added length brings Nanak into closer accord with the Khalsa ideal of uncut hair, while the whiteness strengthens the image of a venerable sage. The latter impression is further emphasized by the common use of the *abhaya mudra* (or a version thereof), a symbol widely used in popular art throughout India. The flowing white beard and hand raised in blessing combine with a general expression of benevolence to communicate a distinct impression of the first Guru. He is Baba Nanak the Teacher, the Guru who supremely bestows peace of mind and spiritual enlightenment.

A second change serves to enhance Nanak's spirituality. All that the

earlier tradition could supply is retained in the seli and ubiquitous mala. Seldom does the Guru's raised hand lack his rosary and invariably there is at least one encircling his turban. This much continues the established tradition. The supplement is provided by drawing the Guru's eyes in a particular way. Half-closed they serve to represent spiritual ecstasy, the divine intoxication of mystical meditation (figures 15, 26–27). Nanak the Teacher of spiritual wisdom has also become Nanak the Mystic.

A third change is signalled by the weakening of symbols associated with asceticism, specifically those which suggest a Nath yogi connection. To some extent this may reflect the decline of the Nath tradition in modern times and its consequent withdrawal from popular awareness. The Nath yogis (or *Siddhs* as they are called in the janam-sakhis) exercised considerable influence during Nanak's own life-time, an influence which is plainly manifest in his own works and in subsequent hagiography.[60] This influence, though decreasing, was still evident in the late nineteenth century, and its presence can still be easily observed in the prints and lithographed janam-sakhis of that period. Baba Nanak still holds converse with Siddhs and uses artifacts which imply a Nath identity.[61] Now, however, the caged parrot and yogi's crutch have disappeared completely and no illustrator seems interested in the old stories of how Baba Nanak humbled the greatest Siddhs in discourse or in miracle-matches. The lota has changed its shape and appears only fitfully. The patched cloak of the yogi has become a colourful shawl and even the clog sandals show signs of giving way to ordinary Punjabi juti. Nanak is no longer the Great Yogi. The role has ceased to be meaningful in the late twentieth century and is accordingly discarded.

The change which takes place in Guru Nanak's head-gear may also relate to the decline of the yogi-image. As we have already noted, the Baba Atal frescoes suggest that a shift from mukat to turban was already beginning late in the nineteenth century. By the late twentieth century the transformation is almost complete. Only occasionally is the mukat retained. The turban which replaces it is, however, a distinctive one which significantly differs from the standard twentieth-century style with its inverted V across the forehead. Baba Nanak's turban is tied straight across the forehead, thereby expressing in yet another way his identity as a venerable sage.

In other respects Nanak's clothing remains essentially the same as his nineteenth-century apparel. He continues to wear a long shirt (jama) with a sash (*kamarband*) tied around his waist and sometimes extended over his left shoulder. In most prints he wears a variegated shawl or possibly a blanket of superior quality over his shoulders. Under the jama his legs are typically clad in a tight-fitting pajama.

Usually Baba Nanak is presented as a portrait, either alone or accompanied by subordinate figures or artifacts. This involves a partial recession on the part of his two companions Mardana and Bala. Whenever a janam-sakhi story is presented, however, both are typically present, Mardana with his rabab and Bala with his peacock-feather chaurie. The threesome portrait, moreover, retains its popularity (figure 20). Baba Nanak still sits under the regal tree flanked by his two disciples. In its literary form this particular image has become a symbol of the communal brotherhood so high on the twentieth-century list of ideals. In this interpretation Mardana represents the Muslim and Bala the Hindu, while Guru Nanak transcends both.[62] Although this interpretation is not immediately evident from the composition or iconography of the modern threesome it is probably safe to assume that many modern eyes will view the picture in this light.

Mardana and Bala have also been dropped from the modern versions of the Ten Gurus conclave. Four features of the modern version of the conclave deserve mention, the first of them a change which necessarily prompted the banishment of Mardana and Bala. As we have already noted, the individual Gurus have been removed from the integrated group and set within their separate frames. It is in fact a conclave no longer, a change which presumably reflects the rationalizing effect of recognizing that such a gathering is an historical impossibility.

The essential linkage is, however, maintained by a second feature. Although beards and garments may vary, the ten Gurus all have the same face. This is not a result of ineptness on the part of the artist. It represents in visual form the fundamental Sikh doctrine that the same divine spirit (*gurū*) successively inhabited ten separate bodies. The facial identity expresses this doctrine.[63]

The third significant feature also represents a fundamental doctrine. This is the presence in these group prints of the sacred scripture. According to orthodox Sikh doctrine, the line of personal Gurus ended at

the death of Guru Gobind Singh, the presence and authority of the eternal Guru passing at that point to the scripture (Guru Granth) and the gathered community (Guru Panth).[64] Whereas the gathered community presents obvious iconographic problems in an already crowded composition the single volume of the sacred scripture is easily accommodated. The Guru is thus represented in his contemporary form as well as in the ten portraits. In some prints the scripture is, like the personal Gurus themselves, nimbate.

Fourthly, we must note in the group prints the meaningful change in attire which we observed in the earlier conclave prints. The first five Gurus all replicate the style associated with Nanak, the only difference being a slight modernizing of the turban from the second Guru onwards. In other respects they follow the first Master's example, each wearing a rosary in his turban and a prayerful seli around his neck. A simple robe is surmounted in each case by the scarf of the humble servant.

The sixth Guru, however, is different. As in earlier prints, the Panth's experience of persecution and Guru Hargobind's decision to take up arms are easily represented by the addition of bow and arrows, uniform and plume. The same effect is further enhanced in the portraits of Guru Gobind Singh by adding at least one steel quoit (*chakkar*) to his turban. Although the falcon is sometimes missing (the head-and-shoulders format eliminates the wrist) both Gurus stand out clearly as military leaders, faithfully reflecting the traditional interpretation of their respective roles.

The remaining three Gurus are ambivalent. Some artists align them all with the militant style of the sixth and the tenth Gurus. Others revert to the 'spiritual' mode of the first five Gurus; while yet others project an uneasy combination of roles.

The change which is thus portrayed in apparel and accessories represents more than a move from the exclusively spiritual to the manifestly militant. In popular tradition the Gurus come to be known as 'Kings' (*pātaśāh* or *pādaśāh*) and this conferring of royal authority also finds expression in the portraits of the later Gurus. The uniforms are embroidered, the plumes surmount diadems, and strings of pearls appear around their necks. One of the individual prints demonstrates that for some illustrators the kingly mode begins with the fourth Guru. In figure 32 Guru Ram Das is manifestly royal, with gorgeous robes, a splendid

throne, embroidered takia and explicit chhatri or regal umbrella. The title 'Padshah' is conventionally applied in popular usage to all ten Gurus. The corresponding iconography, however, typically begins with either the fourth or the sixth Guru.

The supremely royal Padshah is, of course, Guru Gobind Singh. The contemporary image is one which plainly travels far from historical reality, deep into the realm of fantasy. The traditional accoutrements are still in place, sustaining by their conspicuous presence the primary role of the tenth Guru as mighty warrior and Lord of the Khalsa. Various combinations of sword, dagger, bow and arrow, spear, *kaṭār* (scissor dagger), steel quoit and round shield adorn his person. The falcon sits on his wrist, the Guru himself is commonly mounted, and in one popular example he leans against a cannon. Behind and around him one may perceive pennants, battlements and troops. In his turban he invariably wears his own special symbol, the royal plume (*kalgī*).

To this extent the modern image is traditional. It is distinctive in the lushness and luxuriance of its presentation. Swords and daggers are not mere lengths of steel. They are magnificent ornaments with finely-embossed hilts and richly-embroidered scabbards. The Guru's clothing is usually ill-suited to the needs of warfare, emphasizing colourful fabrics and ostentatious design rather than sensible utility. Accessories such as belts and shoes reflect the same passion for conspicuous display, strongly enhanced by the jewellery which the Guru wears in the form of necklaces and diadems. The horse which he rides is usually white or blue and is caparisoned with a richness matching its Master's array (figure 38).

The actual dress which Guru Gobind Singh wears typically comprises a standard range of items. Like Guru Nanak he wears a jama but one of a distinctively different cut. The tenth Guru's jama is usually shorter, sometimes more a tunic than a robe. It typically has a high collar and is often fastened at the side (figure 48). As we have already noted, the garment is usually decorated with rich embroidery. Various colours are used, with saffron slightly more popular than red, pink or green. Contrasting colours are used for the sash tied round his waist. Beneath his jama the Guru wears a tight-fitting white pajama and elegantly decorated slippers (juti). His turban is distinctively conical with a loose end hanging from its peak.

To this basic dress, already heavily embroidered, various ornaments are added. These may include a buckled belt and an ornate shoulder-strap. At least one pearl necklace is mandatory (commonly several strings are shown) and the resplendent plume in the turban is accompanied either by a jewelled aigrette or an ornate version of the Khalsa emblem (the steel quoit surmounted by a two-edged sword and flanked by curved swords). The Guru's beard is usually shown as slightly forked and the tips of his moustache are invariably turned up. He always carries weapons and if the circumstances are appropriate he will also have his falcon. Occasionally a chhatri will be provided.

The contrast with the figure of Baba Nanak is, needless to say, impressive. In the image of the tenth Guru we have divinity expressed as royal authority, military power and ostentatious affluence. As we have already noted, the essential link between the two images is supplied by the miri and piri of Guru Hargobind. In this sense contemporary iconography matches the traditional interpretation of the Panth's development from Guru Nanak's stress on inward meditation to Guru Gobind Singh's founding of the militant Khalsa. There remains, however, a problem. Why have some of the later Gurus become so gorgeous?

The question is one which particularly concerns the figure of Guru Gobind Singh. We may assume that the sumptuous quality of the tenth Guru's image owes much to contemporary printing technology and that earlier generations might well have produced a similar representation had they possessed the means to do so. We might also add that recent history provides examples of royal splendour for the tenth Guru to emulate. Indian princes dressed in grandiose style and portraits of the royal house of Patiala show that Sikh artists have had actual models to copy.[65] Neither observation, however, answers the fundamental question. Plainly this powerful stress on the grand and the gorgeous must reflect popular ideals and aspirations. Whatever the origin or nature of these aspirations they evidently respond to a fantasy which decks the old martial ideal in fancy fabrics and expensive jewels. The demand is of course one which extends well beyond the Punjab and the Panth. Hindu posters and Bombay film-makers deliver a similar product. What this means is that the iconography associated with Guru Gobind Singh is in fact the distinctively Sikh expression of a much larger phenomenon.

In addition to the dress and weaponry of the various Gurus the following symbols and artifacts deserve notice:

1. In modern bazaar prints the halo has become universal for all who possess sanctity. The Gurus are invariably nimbate and likewise such revered figures as Baba Buddha and Baba Dip Singh (figures 33, 52, 53).

2. Extensive use is made of the *ik-oṅkār* symbol (ੴ). This comprises the first two characters recorded in the *Ādi Granth*, a short-hand version of the term expressing the unity of Akal Purakh. Within the modern Panth this symbol has assumed a potently auspicious or talismanic quality and is frequently to be seen on buildings, publications, vehicles and letter-heads. Its contemporary popularity is clearly illustrated by the frequency with which it appears in bazaar prints. In modern bazaar prints it represents the divine Name, the fundamental doctrine of Gurmat.[66] It is shown as a superscription at the top of a picture, a sun or star in the sky (symbolizing a burst of spiritual enlightenment), the source of divine power in the palm of the Guru's hand, a spiritual breastplate, embroidery on a garment or the cloth wrapping for the Guru Granth Sahib (rumal), a decorative badge or pendant, smoke from a fire or flame from a lamp, the hilt of a sword, and the frame for an inset picture. The prominence of this particular symbol in modern iconography contrasts with its rarity in nineteenth-century prints and murals.[67] Its current popularity appears to be a comparatively recent development.

3. The same contrast also applies in the case of the Khalsa symbol. This symbol comprises a steel quoit (chakkar) with a vertical two-edged sword (*khaṛḍā*) flanked by two small curved swords (kirpan). The emblem appears frequently in modern bazaar prints, usually in association with Guru Gobind Singh (founder of the Khalsa). It is worn as a badge on his turban or belt, emblazoned on the flag of the Khalsa (*niśān*), or added to the margin as an appropriate decoration for a print depicting the Lord of the Khalsa. A usage which does not concern the tenth Guru exclusively is its appearance as embroidery on an *Ādi Granth* rumal. As the component parts so clearly indicate, the symbol expresses militancy. This involves defence of the Panth against oppressors and also, in a more general sense, the protection of righteousness from the assaults of the evil. War is not fought for its own sake. It is fought as *dharam yudh*, as a battle waged on behalf of truth and justice. The sword is nevertheless a real one,

as Sikh history so plainly testifies; and it is in these terms that the Khalsa symbol is to be construed.

As with the *ik-oṅkār* symbol there is a dramatic difference between modern proliferation and earlier absence. This can be only partially explained by the scarcity of all such symbols in earlier art. When pennants are added to an 1874 view of the Golden Temple the chosen insignia is not the Khalsa emblem of today. Instead we are shown the older combination of sabre, katar dagger and either a cannon-ball or a shield (figure 13). This suggests that the Khalsa emblem of today is in fact a creation of comparatively modern times.[68]

4. The Guru Granth Sahib appears in a few posters, always with garlands and embroidered mantle (rumal) and usually with the traditional canopy (*chāndnī*). Given the veneration traditionally bestowed on the sacred scripture the incidence of the Guru Granth Sahib in modern bazaar prints is surprisingly low. There is no artistic reason for this relative infrequency as the stylized version is easily incorporated within larger compositions. For examples, see the frontispiece and figures 24–26.

5. Karah prasad (the sacred food prepared in an iron bowl[69]) appears even less frequently. This is perhaps less surprising, for although a prominent item in modern gurdwara worship a bowl or tray of karah prasad is comparatively difficult to incorporate in a well-composed picture. Karah prasad is however a regular feature of prints from the late nineteenth century (figures 3, 6, 10 and 13) and although it is still an important part of Sikh ritual it is possible to see in this feature a gradual diminution of the significance attached to it (figures 25 and 26).

6. Important gurdwaras are sometimes depicted in posters. In the case of the Golden Temple it commonly forms the centre-piece of the picture. In other instances one or more gurdwaras appear as insets. Such gurdwaras bear an overt relationship to the Guru who dominates the picture or to the incident which it portrays. A print illustrating the birth and childhood of Guru Nanak appropriately includes Gurdwara Janam-asthan, the temple which marks his actual birth-place in Nankana Sahib (figure 16). Similarly, a sequence portraying the devoted service of Guru Amar Das concludes with a picture of Gurdwara Baoli Sahib in Goindval (figure 29). As in earlier prints, the Golden Temple is strongly dominant, confirming yet again the supremacy of this particular shrine in the

popular imagination. By contrast, there is a comparative neglect of Sri Kesgarh Sahib, the gurdwara in Anandpur Sahib which marks the founding of the Khalsa (figure 47). This corresponds to reality in the sense that, whereas a steady flow of pilgrims moves endlessly through the Golden Temple (located in easily-accessible Amritsar), comparatively few visit Sri Kesgarh Sahib, situated in the more distant Anandpur.

7. The two-part mantra *Satinām Vāhigurū* (or *Satinām Srī Vāhigurū*), so popular today, inevitably finds its way into some prints. It does so as a superscription; as embroidery on garments, Granth Sahib mantles, oxen covers, and the sail of a symbolic ship; and as engraving on the links in one of the tenth Guru's necklaces (figure 49).[70]

3. Sikh History in Bazaar Prints

Attention was drawn in the introduction to the fact that this book does not seek to relate scholarly history. It is important that the disclaimer should be restated at this point. What follows represents a narrative of Sikh history as it emerges from the bazaar prints. It is, in other words, a deliberately uncritical statement of traditional Sikh 'history' as evidently perceived by those who purchase bazaar prints. Readers who seek the balanced and tested product of the critical scholar must look elsewhere.[71] Here we deal exclusively in tradition.[72]

No excuse is offered for this procedure as none is needed. It is obviously vital that careful scholarship should be encouraged and that its tested findings should be respected. This does not mean, however, that tradition and folklore can be neglected, leaving the historian free to deal exclusively in established facts and his or her interpretations of them. Both make essential contributions to our understanding of a contemporary society, both the knowledge of history as it actually occurred and the dominant perceptions of that history as it is believed to have occurred. The myths matter as much as the facts.

Myths, as we have observed elsewhere, are not to be construed as legends.[73] Typically, they partake of both legend and authentic fact, blending the two in a single interpretation. This has occurred in the Sikh experience as in other religious and ethnic traditions, and the result continues to dominate popular perceptions of the Sikh past. In the case of the Sikh people these perceptions really do matter. Most Sikhs possess a very lively sense of their own history, a sense which continues to exercise a genuinely profound influence on their response to contemporary circumstances. In stating this axiom we merely underline the importance of

understanding the tradition. It is not the latest findings of academic historians which prompt instinctive reactions. It is the traditional view, implanted at an early age and generally undisturbed thereafter.

If therefore we are to understand the influence of historical perceptions on the history-conscious Sikh people it is Sikh tradition which must command our larger attention. Popular art, as we have already emphasized, provides an obvious means of access to the contemporary tradition. The story which it tells is as follows.

Guru Nanak (1469–1539)

Baba Nanak, first of the Sikh Gurus, was born in a Punjabi village to Hindu parents in 1469. The village, known at that time as Rai Bhoi di Talvandi or simply as Talvandi, is situated sixty-five kilometres west-south-west of Lahore. It is now called Nankana Sahib and is located in the Shekhupura district of Pakistan. The janam-sakhis disagree with regard to the actual date of birth. Popular tradition has, however, settled on the early-morning hours of the full-moon night of the month of Kattak, corresponding to 20 October 1469. The child's father was Kalu, keeper of the village land-records. His mother was Tripta.

When he turned seven the child was taken to the local pandit to learn his letters. After only one day, however, he declined to proceed any further, insisting that the one subject worthy of study is the divine Name of God. This and other signs of withdrawal worried his parents, and in response to their concern it was suggested that the boy should be married. An arrangement was duly made and at the age of twelve Nanak was married in Batala to Sulakhani, daughter of a man called Mula. Two sons were eventually born to them, Siri Chand and Lakhmi Das (figure 16).

Nanak, however, remained withdrawn, chosing to meditate rather than work and preferring the company of wandering sadhus to children of his own age. On one occasion this preference brought particular despair to his father. Kalu had persuaded Nanak to learn the elements of trading and had dispatched him to a neighbouring village with funds to finance the necessary purchases. On the way Nanak happened to encounter a group of hungry sadhus and used all the money he carried to purchase food for them (figure 16). Upbraided by his father he insisted that

charity bestowed on the deserving was in fact a 'good bargain' (*kharā saudā*).

Although Kalu was thus bothered by his son's unworldly notions the village headman had his reasons for being impressed. Three incidents persuaded him that Nanak was no ordinary child. On one occasion Nanak went to sleep while grazing the family buffaloes and his untended herd proceeded to demolish a neighbour's crop of standing wheat. When the angry owner complained to Rai Bular, the headman, Nanak insisted that none of the crop had been harmed. A messenger dispatched by Rai Bular ascertained that it had indeed been miraculously restored. The other two incidents also resulted from Nanak falling asleep outside the village. On one occasion Rai Bular observed that the shade of a tree remained stationary in order to shield the sleeping child from the sun's rays. Subsequently he observed a cobra performing the same function with its distended hood (figure 17). This, he concluded, was no ordinary child, and he admonished Kalu to be less harsh towards his son.

The problem of Nanak's future seemed to have been solved when a welcome invitation arrived from Jai Ram, husband of his sister Nanaki. Jai Ram, who worked as steward for Nawab Daulat Khan of Sultanpur Lodhi (in Jalandhar district), had managed to find employment for Nanak in the Nawab's store-house. The offer was duly accepted and Nanak proved to be a diligent employee. There was, however, one small problem. When counting weights he was sometimes led into a trance by the number thirteen. The word for thirteen (*terān* or *terāh*) is very similar to the word for 'thine' (*terā*) and, prompted by this reminder of God's grace, Nanak would continue to repeat 'tera' instead of proceeding to fourteen and beyond.

The Nawab was well pleased with his new employee's services, particularly when a false charge of embezzlement revealed that the state grain supply had actually been increased. He was accordingly alarmed to learn one morning that his servant had disappeared while bathing in the stream which flows past Sultanpur, and little comforted by what followed when Nanak eventually emerged from the water three days later. The janam-sakhis record that he had been carried to God's court and had there been commissioned with the duty of preaching the divine Name. When he returned to the world of men he remained silent for one day and then

uttered the cryptic message 'There is neither Hindu nor Muslim'. The Nawab's *qāzī* was not amused, believing that the statement somehow equated Muslim with Hindu. Nanak, summoned to explain, caused further offence by laughing while the qazi was reciting the noonday prayer. The qazi was, however, instantly silenced when Nanak explained the reason for his laughter. He had divined that the qazi, while outwardly reciting the prayer, was inwardly worrying about a new-born filly which he had unwisely left near a well.

Nanak then left Sultanpur to begin a lengthy period of travelling on foot across the length and breadth of the Indian sub-continent, and to lands beyond. Although the earlier janam-sakhis name only Mardana as a companion, those of the *Bālā* tradition insist that he was also accompanied by Bhai Bala. Popular art, reflecting a strongly dominant popular opinion, accepts the latter view and bazaar prints typically show both men in the Guru's company, Mardana equipped with his rabab and Bala with peacock-feather chaurie (figures 8, 20).

An early destination on the Guru's travels is believed to have been the sacred city of Hardwar on the Ganga. It happened to be a festival day and crowds of pilgrims were standing in the river casting water towards the rising sun. The Guru joined them but instead of splashing water eastwards he did so towards the west. Those around him naturally wanted to know why he was so flagrantly flouting the tradition. 'Because', explained Nanak, 'I have a field near Lahore which needs water. I am irrigating it.' The objectors who denounced this absurd notion were abruptly silenced when the Guru suggested that his water had a better chance of reaching Lahore than theirs had of reaching the sun.

During his travels Baba Nanak, obeying the command received from God, preached the peace-giving divine Name to all who were prepared to hear it. Inevitably he encountered hostile receptions from the proud and ignorant, and occasionally the travellers found themselves confronted by serious danger. One such incident occurred when they entered the land of Kauru, a territory ruled by female magicians led by a queen called Nur Shah (figure 18). If men strayed into their domain these enchantresses turned them into animals and this is precisely what one of them did to Mardana when he approached them at his Master's command. Following his servant, Baba Nanak discovered that he had been changed into a

sheep. The same magic directed at Nanak himself failed to have any effect. Indeed, the tables were turned when the Guru caused a pot to adhere to one woman's head and then had Mardana restored by instructing him to say 'Vahiguru'. Nur Shah and her companions let loose a storm of magic, fiercely flying at him mounted on tiger-skins. It was to no avail. Baba Nanak, armed with the power of the divine Name, proved more than a match for them and the women of Kauru were compelled to submit. Having blessed them, Baba Nanak, with Mardana and Bala, proceeded on his way.

While returning from Kauru the Guru is believed to have visited Jagannath Puri where the evening service of lamp-lighting inspired him to utter his celebrated hymn entitled *Āratī*. After twelve years of travelling he eventually returned to the Punjab and, after visiting his parents in Talvandi, he took up residence on the banks of the Ravi river, north-east of Lahore. The local administrator, hearing that this new arrival was corrupting the minds of Muslims as well as Hindus, decided to arrest him. When he tried to ride his horse towards the Guru a series of disasters overtook him. First his horse refused to budge; then the official was struck blind; and finally he tumbled from his steed. The people who observed his misfortunes explained that they occurred because he had arrogantly attempted to approach Baba Nanak on horseback. A man of such spiritual eminence can be approached only on foot, they explained. This the humbled official did and received from Baba Nanak a generous welcome. Impressed by the Guru's piety and wisdom he had a village built on the spot and decreed that the produce of its lands should support the Guru's work. The village was called Kartarpur and it was there that Baba Nanak spent the rest of his life, apart from the periods devoted to further travel.

During his next journey Nanak and his companions happened upon the grove of a monster (*rākaś*), a fearsome creature who seized wayfarers and boiled them in a large cauldron of oil. As the three travellers approached the grove the monster seized Mardana and, stripping off his clothes, thrust the terrified man into the waiting cauldron (figure 19). The Guru calmly saved his servant from the fate which awaited him. When he thrust his finger into the oil it instantly cooled and, no matter how vigorously the monster stoked his fire, the oil refused to heat. It had been

cooled by the power of the divine Name. The monster acknowledged defeat and, falling at the Guru's feet, became a disciple.

The encounter with the monster is popularly believed to have taken place in the wilds of Central India while the Guru was heading southwards. Eventually he reached Singhaladip (Sri Lanka), drawn by the devotion of a certain Raja Shivnabh who had earlier been converted by a visiting Sikh. When Guru Nanak entered Shivnabh's withered garden it instantly blossomed and the Raja, hearing this news, realized that the long-awaited Nanak must surely have arrived. To ensure that the mysterious visitor really was the Guru he sent seductive slave-girls to tempt him. This they conspicuously failed to do and Raja Shivnabh was now almost certain that the Guru's identity had been established. He himself then went to the garden and humbly asked the visitor to give his name. In response Baba Nanak sang one of his own compositions and, because his name appeared in the last line, Shivnabh finally received the assurance he needed. He fell at the Guru's feet in joyous welcome.

A later journey took Baba Nanak and his faithful companions westward, leading them eventually into the Muslim holy city of Mecca. Arriving there the weary travellers lay down to sleep in the precincts of a mosque. A qazi who happened to pass was scandalized to observe that the impious visitors were lying with their polluting feet sacrilegiously pointing towards the mosque's miharab (the niche which marks the direction of the most sacred Ka'bah). At his command a mosque attendant seized the Guru's offending legs and dragged them away from the direction of the miharab (figure 7). As he did so, the miharab miraculously moved with the Guru's legs and no matter where the attendant laid them they remained pointing towards the miharab. The confounded qazi, recognizing the presence of a mighty man of God, fell at his feet.

Another Muslim humbled by the power of the Guru was the celebrated Vali Qandhari, who lived on a hilltop near Hasan Abdal (between Rawalpindi and Peshawar). While passing that way Baba Nanak paused to rest at the foot of the hill. As the only available source of drinking water proved to be a spring on Vali Qandhari's hilltop the Guru sent Mardana up the hill to request a supply. Vali Qandhari, having heard of Baba Nanak's fame, was filled with spiteful jealousy. He dismissed Mardana empty-handed, haughtily declaring: 'If your Master is so clever let him

find his own water'. When a second request met with the same blank refusal Baba Nanak accepted the challenge. Tapping the ground with his staff he opened a gushing spring of crystal-clear water at the foot of the hill. The spring on the hilltop immediately dried up. Its enraged guardian, realizing that he had been outwitted, sent a huge boulder hurtling down the hill towards the Guru and his two companions. Again he was thwarted in his evil intention, for the Guru merely raised his hand and stopped the mighty rock in full flight (figure 17 inset). The force of impact left the Guru's hand imprinted on the rock, and the location has ever since been known as Panja Sahib (the Sacred Hand-mark).[74]

In Nanak's time Nath yogis were a prominent presence in North India. These ascetics, distinguished by such features as their ash-smeared bodies and large ear-rings, claimed to be followers of Guru Gorakhnath. Renowned throughout North India and beyond Gorakhnath was the greatest of the Siddhs, the famous wonder-working Masters of the Nath cult. Many centuries had elapsed since he had roamed the plains of North India, but like other lesser Siddhs he was believed to have attained immortality by the practice of hatha-yoga and to be dwelling on the remote snow-bound heights of the Himalaya. It was there, on the legendary Mount Sumeru, that Baba Nanak encountered him and engaged him in discourse.

On a subsequent occasion Nanak visited a group of Siddhs at Achal Batala, a Nath centre near Kartarpur (figure 9). The Siddhs were embarrassed on this occasion as someone had successfully hidden their lota. Only Baba Nanak, to their chagrin, was able to locate it. Spurning Nanak's message of the divine Name the Siddhs insisted on a contest of magical powers and proceeded to demonstrate their own considerable skills in this regard by flying on deerskins and walking on water. Nanak, however, proved himself to be their superior. First he challenged the Siddhs to disappear and when they vanished he located each of them with his mystical powers. He himself then disappeared and remained invisible until the Siddhs finally acknowledged defeat. Yet again Baba Nanak had proved himself to be the supreme Master.

Oppressors of the poor also found themselves humiliated by the Guru. West of Kartarpur lay Eminabad and in this town there lived a humble carpenter called Lalo. While Baba Nanak was staying with Lalo on one occasion a wealthy notable of the town, Malak Bhago by name, invited the

Guru to attend a sumptuous feast. The invitation was refused and Bhago was able to secure Nanak's presence only by resorting to force. He demanded an explanation for the persistent refusal. In reply Baba Nanak took a piece of Lalo's coarse bread in one hand and a portion of Bhago's rich fare in the other. He then squeezed both pieces of food. From Lalo's there issued milk, while from Bhago's flowed blood (figures 16 inset and 22). One had been earned by honest labour, the other by meanness and extortion.

It was also in Eminabad (or Saidpur as it was previously known) that Baba Nanak encountered the celebrated Mughal Emperor, Babur. The janam-sakhis report that the Guru was in the vicinity of the town when the invader assaulted and sacked it. After Baba Nanak and Mardana had been imprisoned and made to do forced labour their jailer noticed a strange thing. The load which Baba Nanak had been carrying remained suspended a cubit above his head, while the horse entrusted to Mardana followed him without being led. Hearing of these marvels Babur visited the prison. Baba Nanak had meanwhile been set to grinding corn and the Emperor observed that the Guru's hand-mill turned magically without assistance. All the Guru had to do was pour corn into it. Greatly impressed, Babur agreed to release all the Saidpur prisoners.

In his later years Guru Nanak spent more of his time in Kartarpur, supervising the affairs of the village and preaching the message of the divine Name to the crowds who visited him for his blessings. With him remained his two faithful attendants and also the members of his own family. Kirtan was regularly sung in Kartarpur and those who came for the Guru's darshan were expected to participate. Amongst the regular participants was a young boy, conspicuous by his age in adult company. When asked by the Guru as to why he spent his time listening to kirtan rather than playing with other children, he replied that, when watching a fire burning he observed how the small sticks were consumed first. The same, he reasoned, might conceivably apply to people and he was accordingly preparing himself for death. Applauded for a wisdom far beyond his years, the boy was thereafter styled Buddha or 'Old Man'. In spite of his misgivings he lived to an unusually old age, winning vast respect for his service to the Gurus and his assistance to other Sikhs (figure 33). Another tradition relates that he received his name from Baba Nanak when the

Guru visited the child's village of Kathunangal and was greatly impressed by the mature wisdom of his discourse.

Amongst those who resided with Baba Nanak in Kartarpur were his two sons. One of them, Siri Chand, had become a yogi and neither he nor his brother Lakhmi Das could be regarded as a suitable successor to their father. A successor would one day be needed, for the Guru's fame had attracted a growing band of devout followers and the newly-formed Nanak-panth could not be left leaderless. According to tradition, the choice of successor was determined by a series of tests imposed on his Sikhs by Baba Nanak. The first test concerned a bundle of wet, slimy paddy. A newly-arrived disciple, Lahina by name, immediately obeyed his Master's command to place the sodden mass on his head, ruining his new clothes in the process. On a later occasion Baba Nanak took a group of his Sikhs for a walk. On the path they discovered first copper coins, then silver coins and finally gold coins. At each discovery some of his followers succumbed to temptation and picked up the coins, eventually leaving two unblemished Sikhs. Further along the road they came upon a funeral pyre, complete with foul-smelling corpse. Baba Nanak instructed his two unblemished disciples to begin eating the corpse. One of the two, appalled at the gruesome prospect, took to his heels, leaving only Lahina. Lifting the cloth Lahina discovered that the corpse actually consisted of confectionery. He had passed the ultimate test and, after receiving the new name of Angad, he was duly designated his Master's successor.

Following the appointment of Angad as successor to the title of Guru the news spread that Nanak was approaching death. Crowds of Sikhs assembled for a final audience, Muslims as well as Hindus. A dispute broke out between the two, the Muslims proclaiming that they would bury the Guru's body as their tradition required, while the Hindus insisted that, of course, it would be cremated. Baba Nanak instructed each group to lay flowers on either side of his body, informing them that whichever side's flowers were still fresh following his death should determine the manner of final disposal. He then covered himself with a sheet and passed away. When his Sikhs raised the sheet they found that their Guru's body had disappeared and that the flowers on both sides were still fresh. The Muslims duly buried their share of flowers while the Hindus cremated theirs.

Guru Angad (*1504–52*)

Although traditions concerning the birth-place and conversion of the second Guru disagree, the following version appears to be the stronger contender. Lahina was born in the village of Harike, near Matte di Sarai in Firozpur district. It was his custom to lead an annual pilgrimage to the shrine of Durga at Jwalamukhi and, on one such occasion, the pilgrims decided to seek Baba Nanak's blessing as they passed by Kartarpur. Lahina was so impressed by the Guru that he abandoned his pilgrimage and forthwith became a Sikh. He was accepted as such by his new Master and instructed to live in his wife's village of Khadur (in Amritsar district). Eventually, as we have seen, he was renamed Angad and appointed to succeed Nanak as Guru.

Lahina (or Angad) figures prominently in the janam-sakhis as a conspicuously devoted servant of Baba Nanak and it is perhaps surprising that modern perceptions of his importance should be so weak. The only tradition which attracts frequent mention is the popular view that he invented the Gurmukhi script. As one would expect, most of the stories told of Guru Angad concern his earlier years as Baba Nanak's ever-loyal disciple, one who would obey the most unreasonable of commands simply because it had been issued by the Guru. The corpse-eating test has already been mentioned. Another story describes how the faithful Angad sat through a violent storm, soaked and benumbed, guarding his Master's clothes while Nanak took an extended early-morning bath in the Ravi river.

After Nanak died the new Guru returned to Khadur, which remained his home thereafter. Popular tradition relates that Humayun, second of the Mughal emperors, passed that way while fleeing from the victorious Sher Shah Suri. Hearing of Guru Angad's spiritual powers he entered Khadur to request his intercession, but was obliged to stand waiting as the Guru happened to be playing with some local children. After an hour of demeaning delay the angry Humayun grasped his sword, only to discover that his hand remained firmly stuck to the hilt. There it remained until he apologized to the Guru. The sword, chided the Guru, should have been used on Sher Shah Suri, not on defenceless fakirs. Had he not laid his hand on his sword his kingdom would have been returned immediately.

Now there would have to be some delay and Humayun would have to endure a period of exile before being restored to power.

Guru Amar Das (1479–1574)

Although Amar Das was considerably older than Angad he heard the message of Guru Nanak much later. During the intervening years he had devoted much effort to the quest for enlightenment, following the devotional path of a Vaishnava Hindu. This included annual visits to the Ganga and once, while returning to his village of Basarki in Amritsar district, he found himself in the company of a devout sadhu. After they had dined together the sadhu happened to ask who Amar Das' guru might be. He was dismayed to learn that his companion had no guru and, because he had accepted food from such a person, he was obliged to return to the Ganga for a purificatory bath.

Amar Das now realized that he must find a guru if he was to achieve enlightenment and bent his efforts in this direction. One morning he happened to hear from a neighbouring house in Basarki the voice of Guru Angad's daughter singing a hymn by Guru Nanak. Its words spoke straight to his heart and he insisted that the singer should take him to Nanak's successor, her father. This she did and Amar Das attached himself to the Guru's following in Khadur.

He had not been there long when a problem arose. Meat was one day served to the *sangat* and at first it seemed that the strictly vegetarian Vaishnava would be expected to partake like everyone else. Guru Angad spared him the obligation by summoning a separate meal without meat, but for Amar Das the problem remained. If his own custom were to differ from that of his Guru how could he possibly be accepted as a disciple? Accordingly, he requested a share of the meat and Guru Angad, recognizing that superstition had been finally overcome, gladly supplied it from his own dish.

Having thus been accepted as a disciple Amar Das remained with Guru Angad, distinguishing himself by unusually dedicated service to his new Master. During most of this period he did not actually live in Khadur. A short distance away another devotee had recently constructed the new settlement of Goindval and Amar Das was directed to live there. Each

morning he arose before dawn and, on his way to Khadur, visited the nearby Beas river to bring water to the Guru (figure 29 inset). The remainder of the day was divided between menial duties on the Guru's behalf and sharing in the regular kirtan of the sangat. After ensuring that his Master was comfortably settled for the night he returned to Goindval. There he continued his own *nām japan* (devout repetition of the divine Name) and, to ensure that sleep did not deprive him of the privilege, he remained standing with his hand grasping a handle on the wall (figure 29 inset). Others regarded his devotion as absurd and laughed at the way his turban grew annually larger. Each year Guru Angad presented him with a new length of turban-cloth, but, instead of removing its predecessors, Amar Das merely added to his existing turban.

One night, as a storm lashed Khadur, Guru Angad asked for water. Neither of his sons would stir but Amar Das, who happened to be on hand, immediately ventured out into the darkness and rain. Returning from the river he stumbled into a weaver's pit (figure 29 inset). Cries of 'Thief!' were raised but the weaver's wife called out that it was merely the foolish servant of a useless master. 'You are mad!' shouted Amar Das, angered by the insult offered to the Guru. Instantly the woman became insane and was restored only when her penitent husband took her to the Guru.

The Guru had meanwhile determined that the faithful Amar Das would succeed him and in due course this took place. There was, however, a disappointed contender for the title. Datu, one of Guru Angad's two sons, claimed to continue the succession in Khadur and, striding over to Goindval, he kicked the aged Amar Das off his seat. Having expressed concern for the condition of Datu's foot Guru Amar Das returned to Basarki without telling anyone where he was going and there he had himself sealed in a cell. An inscription affixed to the exterior declared that no true Sikh would open the door. Back in Goindval the distraught sangat searched helplessly for their lost Guru. It was Baba Buddha who suggested a solution. This was to turn the Guru's mare loose and follow where she led. The horse promptly proceeded to the cell in Basarki where the searchers were now confronted by the prohibitory inscription. This they successfully circumvented by breaking down a portion of the wall, thus reclaiming their Guru.

Under the inspiration of Guru Amar Das the town of Goindval thrived, noted in particular for the unfailing generosity of the Guru's *langar* (the supply of free food to all who assembled for it). Even the Emperor Akbar ate a portion of the Guru's food when he visited the town. A problem which still bothered the Guru was the inclination of his Sikhs to regard themselves as ordinary Hindus and to continue visiting such pilgrimage-centres as Hardwar. To attract them to Goindval he began digging a large well (*bāolī*) to serve as a distinctively Sikh pilgrimage-centre. Instead of bathing at Hardwar the Gurus' followers would take their sacred dip in Goindval.

Late in the excavation a serious obstacle was encountered in the form of rocks. This required a stake to be driven into the actual source of the water and the brave workman who performed this task was drowned in the violent gush which followed. When his body floated to the surface the Guru touched the deceased man and restored him to life. The well was duly completed, with eighty-four steps leading down to the water, and it remains one of the major Sikh shrines (figure 29 inset). Tradition maintains that anyone who repeats the whole of Guru Nanak's *Japjī* on each step will secure instant liberation from the cycle of transmigration.

Amar Das maintained the first Guru's practice of expressing his teachings in hymns composed for kirtan. He also arranged for the works of the first three Gurus to be recorded in four volumes, together with other hymns which were approved for use in Sikh kirtan. These volumes, the so-called Goindval *pothīs*, were later to form the basis for Guru Arjan's *Ādi Granth*.

Guru Ram Das (1534–81)

The fourth Guru was born in Lahore and tradition relates of him a story very similar to one concerning the young Nanak. Originally known as Jetha, the young man was once given grain by his mother and told to sell it in the Lahore bazaar. Proceeding to the Ravi river Jetha found there a group of sadhus and in response to their request gave them his entire supply. The gift testified to his strong sense of devotion, as did his habit of consorting with other religious people. It was one such group which told him of Guru Amar Das and escorted him to Goindval. The attraction

proved to be mutual. Jetha accepted Amar Das as his Master and the Guru subsequently chose him as husband for his younger daughter, Bibi Bhani. He eventually succeeded his father-in-law, receiving from him the name Ram Das.

Guru Ram Das is particularly associated with the founding of Amritsar and excavation of the pool of that name which now surrounds the Golden Temple. The initial decision to establish a new village and dig a sacred pool was taken during the period of Guru Amar Das. Acting on his father-in-law's instructions, Jetha inspected territory north-west of Goindval and eventually decided that a tract situated near the village of Sultanvind would be ideal for his purposes. There he began the excavations which were to produce two sacred pools and eventually the city of Amritsar. The first pool to be dug was named Santokhsar. It was the second which received the name Amritsar or 'Lake of Immortality', subsequently applied to the town which developed around it. Neither pool was finally completed until the time of the fifth Guru. A popular story (illustrated in figure 30) tells how the life-giving qualities of the sacred water of Amritsar were first revealed.

The story begins in the town of Patti (in Amritsar district) where the local magistrate, Duni Chand, once assembled his five daughters and asked them to declare who provided for their wants. The four elder sisters insisted that their needs were abundantly supplied by their parents. Piety had, however, laid hold of the youngest daughter Rajni and she maintained the supreme Provider to be Akal Purakh (God). Her enraged father, astounded at such ingratitude, punished the recalcitrant girl by marrying her to a loathsome, leprous cripple and turned her out of his home with no means of support.

Trusting in Akal Purakh Bibi Rajni provided for her crippled leper husband by begging. In obedient response to his pleading she subsequently carried him in a basket from one pilgrimage-centre to another, in the earnest hope that such visits would at least earn him merit in his next incarnation. Eventually their wanderings brought the couple to the pool of Amritsar, then in the course of excavation. Rajni left her husband in the shade of a convenient *ber* tree while she went in search of alms. While awaiting her return the leper observed a curious thing. Black crows which plunged into the pool emerged as snow-white doves. Appreciating that

there must be some special property in the water he crawled into the pool and was instantly cured of both his lameness and his leprosy. All that remained uncleansed was the finger which he had used to retain his hold on the ber tree.

When Rajni returned from her begging she was quite unable to recognize in the healthy young man her lame and leprous husband. No amount of assurance from the husband or from casual bystanders could convince her. Eventually, one of the latter mentioned that Guru Ram Das was sitting nearby and could be asked for advice. At the Guru's suggestion the husband dipped his leprous finger into the sacred water and when it emerged cleansed Rajni finally acknowledged that the miracle had indeed occurred.

Within the sacred pool was eventually set the temple which was to become the chief shrine of the Sikhs, 'the place beyond compare'. The temple is variously known as Sri Harimandir Sahib, Darbar Sahib or the Golden Temple. Although it was during the time of the fifth Guru that the pool was completed and the first temple erected, both are firmly associated with Guru Ram Das in the popular mind (figures 31 and 32).

Guru Arjan (1563–1606)

Ever since the death of Baba Nanak the succession to the title of Guru had been determined in accordance with merit, sons being passed over in favour of devoted disciples. Although Guru Arjan was clearly chosen for the traditional reason, his accession nevertheless marks a significant development in that he was a son of his deceased predecessor. Thereafter the succession remained within the male line of the same family, all the remaining Gurus being direct descendants of Guru Ram Das.

This did not mean that the merit criterion had been abandoned, neither in the choice of Guru Arjan nor that of his successors. Arjan was the third son of Guru Ram Das, his credentials being viewed as superior to those of either of his older brothers. The eldest of the three sons, Prithi Chand, subsequently acted in a manner which plainly demonstrated the wisdom of omitting him from the succession. His hostility was to create considerable difficulty and danger for his younger brother.

Meanwhile, the new Guru's energies were fully occupied with the

completion of his father's unfinished tasks. The pools of Santokhsar and Amritsar had to be completed and when this had been achieved a temple was built on an island in the centre of the latter, connected to its bank by a causeway. This, as we have already seen, was the first Harimandir or Darbar Sahib, declared by Guru Arjan to be the noblest of all places (figures 31 and 32). Unlike the standard Hindu temple of North India with its single entrance, Harimandir was built with doors on all four sides, traditionally believed to be symbols of welcome to people of all origins and creeds. Tradition also affirms that the Guru invited Mian Mir, a Muslim holy man of local repute, to lay the foundation stone of the temple.

Having completed his father's building programme in Amritsar, Guru Arjan spent some time travelling around the local countryside establishing new Sikh centres. Two important foundations dating from this period are Tarn Taran in Amritsar district and Kartarpur in Jalandhar district (not to be confused with Guru Nanak's village of the same name). Although much was thus achieved there remained a continuing cause for anxiety, one which particularly afflicted the Guru's wife, Mata Ganga. In spite of her many prayers no son had been born to them.

It was Guru Arjan himself who suggested that Mata Ganga should secure her long-cherished desire by seeking the intercession of the aged and pious Baba Buddha. Her first visit to his rural hut was a failure, for she made the mistake of trying to impress him with gifts of rich food. When she returned with simple food the offering was accepted and, as he crushed the onions she had brought (figure 33), Baba Buddha predicted that the son to be born to her would in like manner crush the heads of his enemies. The son which Mata Ganga so ardently desired was duly born and was named Hargobind.

The birth of Hargobind prompted the ever-jealous Prithi Chand to take action. Hitherto he had been persuaded that the absence of an heir would ensure that the succession would eventually return to him and would pass to his own son, Miharban. Now, with the unwelcome appearance of this child, his hopes had been dashed. It was essential that the child should be destroyed and this the evil Prithi Chand endeavoured to bring about. A family wet-nurse was bribed to administer poison with her milk, a cobra was released within reach of the child, and a Brahman

servant was induced to offer him poisoned food. Each stratagem failed, revealing for all to see the wicked designs of the older brother. Guru Arjan declared Prithi Chand and all his followers to be Minas, dissembling rogues whom the faithful must shun.

Prithi Chand's efforts to secure the title for himself were subsequently responsible for a decision of fundamental importance. A group of Sikhs approached Guru Arjan and represented before him the difficulty they were encountering as a result of works circulated by Prithi Chand. How, they asked him, were they to distinguish the authentic compositions of the Gurus from the spurious concoctions of the Minas? The answer, they suggested, would be to have an authorized collection compiled, one which true Sikhs could use in the safe assurance that its contents were reliable.

Guru Arjan accepted their petition and appointed the learned Bhai Gurdas to assist him. With some difficulty Guru Amar Das' collection was obtained from his son Mohan in Goindval and the new pool of Ramsar was excavated outside Amritsar. Beside Ramsar, and armed with the four Goindval volumes, Guru Arjan proceeded to compile his own definitive scripture, the *Ādi Granth*. Bhai Gurdas acted as amanuensis. The new collection was completed in 1604 and the volume in which it was recorded was solemnly installed in Sri Harimandir with Baba Buddha as its first custodian.

A new enemy now appeared on the scene to harass the Guru. This was Chandu Shah, a Punjabi who had risen to high office in the service of the Mughal Emperor. Chandu Shah had a daughter whom it was proving difficult to marry because bridegrooms of appropriate status were exceedingly scarce. Eventually, he succumbed to his worried wife's insistence that the young Hargobind would make an acceptable husband for the girl, only to be humiliated by Guru Arjan's refusal to agree. Chandu Shah had earlier declared that a brick baked for a palace should never be used to construct a gutter. He had been persuaded by his wife to set his prejudice aside, but his earlier opinion had reached the Guru and prompted a refusal of the grudging offer.

The outraged Chandu Shah proceeded to use his considerable influence to avenge the slight, aided by the fact that the tolerant Akbar had recently been succeeded by the bigoted Jahangir. The Guru was alleged to have

aided the new Emperor's rebellious son, Khusro, and this is said to have predisposed Jahangir to sanction Chandu Shah's vengeful designs. The Guru was imprisoned in Lahore fort and there tortured most cruelly. A steel plate was heated over a fire and on it the Guru was forced to sit while burning sand was poured over him. Eventually, he was permitted to bathe in the cooling waters of the Ravi. Slipping into the river he disappeared from sight and was never seen again.

Guru Hargobind (1594–1644)

While suffering the torture of his Lahore captors, Guru Arjan is said to have declared that his son should sit fully armed on his throne. Mughal hostility was now an open threat and should be met by resistance. No longer could the Guru be a simple man of peace. In future he must be prepared to use the sword.

Following his succession the new Guru, Hargobind, donned not one sword but two. Offered the traditional seli at his consecration, he put it aside with the comment that the fakir's necklace of beads was no longer an appropriate insignia. Instead, he would wear the sword-belt of the warrior leader, carrying on it the twin swords of piri (spiritual authority) and miri (worldly authority). The Guru was to be simultaneously a spiritual teacher (as of old) and a military leader (combating the external threats which now confronted the Panth).

Other symbols expressed the same fundamental change. On his turban the Guru now wore an aigrette. Hunting was an activity admirably suited to the encouragement of military skills and so a falcon appears on the Guru's wrist. On the bank of Amritsar pool another building was erected, its frontage facing Sri Harimandir. This was Akal Banga, or Akal Takht ('Throne of the Timeless One'). Harimandir remained as the visible symbol of the spiritual life of the Panth. Akal Takht added a similarly visible symbol of its worldly involvement, and decisions concerning political or military issues were thereafter taken in its immediate precincts.

Although the Guru's policy and style had thus changed in direct response to Mughal hostility, the early relationship between Guru Hargobind and the Emperor Jahangir was at first a cautiously cordial one. Later, there were to be three battles fought between various Mughal

forces and the Sikh troops of Guru Hargobind, but those trials of strength lay in the future. According to Sikh tradition, the Emperor was persuaded by his astrologers that imminent calamity could only be avoided if he were to send someone of notable piety into Gwalior Fort, there to perform penance on his behalf. Guru Hargobind agreed to perform this service. Within the fort he found numerous rajas imprisoned in appalling conditions and when the time came for him to depart he refused to go unless these unfortunate captives went with him.

This early concord between Guru and Emperor also brought retribution to the malign Chandu Shah. Having continued to pursue the son after destroying the father he found himself the victim of his own evil schemes. The Emperor delivered him into the Guru's hands, and he in turn passed the wicked man on to his Sikhs. With blackened face and hands bound, Chandu Shah was paraded through Lahore amidst all manner of indignity. He was beaten with shoes and pelted with mud, with ordure heaped on his head. Each day scavengers led him through the streets, forcing him to beg for his living. After fifteen days of this treatment he was struck down with an iron ladle and killed. The wheel of fortune had indeed turned.

This period of comparative peace was eventually disturbed and hostility again returned. The change took place after Jahangir had been succeeded by Shahjahan in 1628 and led to three separate engagements. Horses were a feature of the changing circumstances and stories concerning confiscated horses loom large in the traditions concerning the sixth Guru. The most famous of these stories relates the horse-rustling skills of the Guru's servant Bidhi Chand.

Two agents of the Guru who had travelled up to Kabul to collect funds were bringing back two splendid white horses for their Master. The two horses, Dilbagh and Gulbagh, had been seized by royal officials in Lahore and presented to the Emperor. Bidhi Chand, having vowed to recover them, managed to ingratiate himself in the royal stables and, after much patient preparation, was able to escape with Dilbagh over the battlements. He subsequently returned disguised as a magician and, having established his credentials as a horse-tracker, was able to escape with Gulbagh also.

As Guru Hargobind's life drew to its close the problem of the succession again became acute. The Guru's three marriages had produced five sons but the obvious successor, his first-born Gurditta, had already

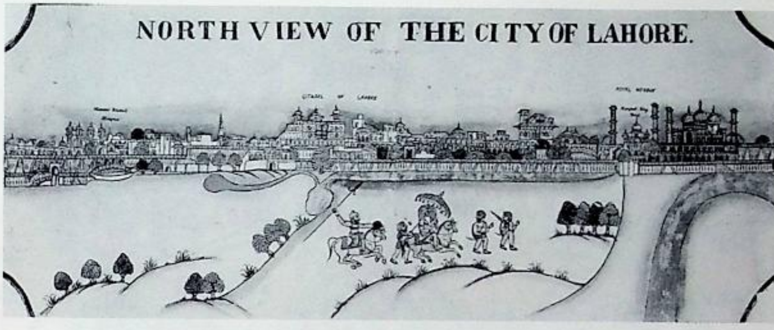


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4


Gulab Singh King of Jummu & Kashmir.
Jindan (late Queen)
Sher Singh Attarewala.
Raja Dina Nath.

Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11

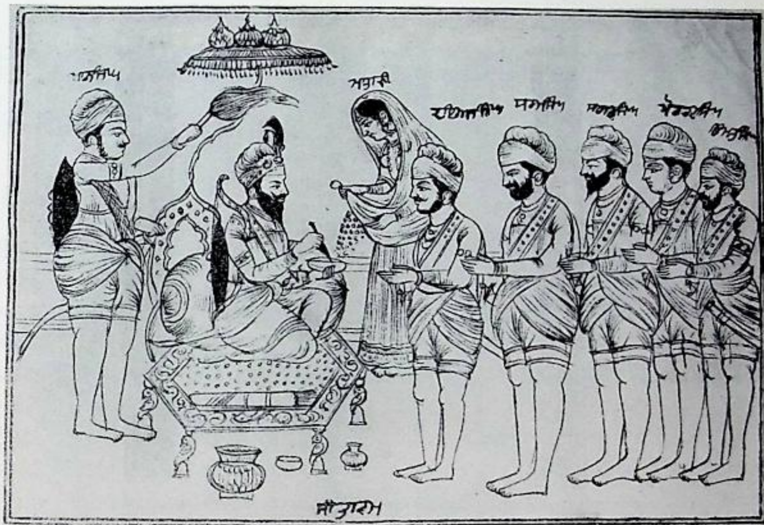


Fig. 12



Fig. 13

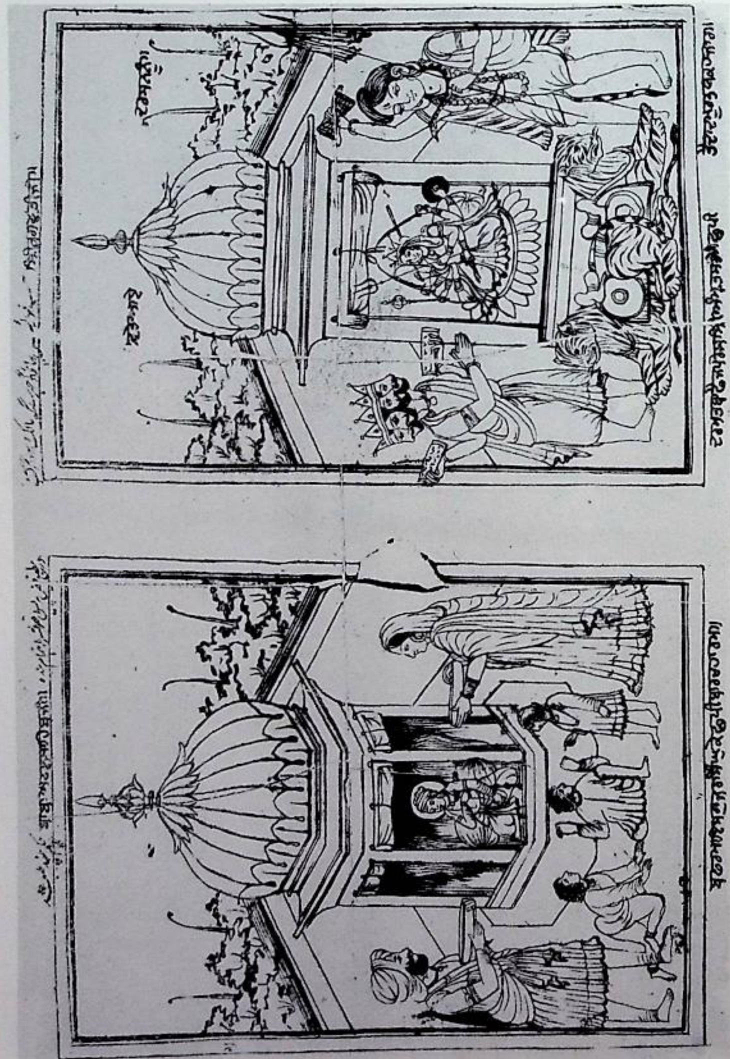


Fig. 14

died. The same fate had befallen the pious Atal Rai (figure 14) and the remaining sons were either ill-suited or unready for the demanding responsibility. The Guru's choice eventually turned out to be Gurditta's second son Har Rai. With his accession in 1644 the Panth returned to a period of peace.

Guru Har Rai (1630–61)

The most popular of all stories concerning Guru Har Rai relates an incident said to have occurred during his childhood. It records how the child was moved to tears when his flowing robe, brushing against a shrub, destroyed several of its flowers. Another tradition relates that he shared his grandfather's interest in hunting, but that he pursued wild animals to capture and keep them as pets, not to kill them.

Prior to his death Guru Hargobind had already withdrawn from the plains and settled at the edge of the foothills in Kiratpur. This now became the Panth's chief centre and it was there that Guru Har Rai received a summons from the Emperor Aurangzeb. A visit to Delhi was believed to be too risky as there could be no trusting a person such as Aurangzeb. It was decided that Ram Rai, the Guru's elder son, should go in his place. The visit proved to be the occasion for paternal disappointment when Ram Rai endeavoured to win favour at court by working miracles and by grievously misinterpreting the sacred words of Baba Nanak in order to placate the Emperor. Ram Rai was displaced from the succession and, when Guru Har Rai died at the early age of thirty, he was followed by his second son, Har Krishan.

Guru Har Krishan (1656–64)

The eighth Guru was little more than five years old when he succeeded his father in 1661, and he was still a child when he died of smallpox three years later. As we noted earlier, this does not mean that his memory has faded from the Panth. The child Guru is well remembered, occupying that special niche reserved for the pious who die young (figure 34). The child's death took place in Delhi. He had been summoned there by Aurangzeb but, in obedience to his father's command, he refused to see

the Emperor. The visit was for the benefit of the Sikhs who lived in Delhi and it was in their midst that Guru Har Krishan died.

Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621–75)

At the point of death Guru Har Krishan had uttered the cryptic words 'Baba Bakale' as the sole indication of who his successor should be. This message was taken to mean 'The Baba who is in Bakala' and soon the small village of Bakala (in Amritsar district) contained twenty-two pretenders to the title. A merchant called Makhan Shah solved the problem of how to identify the true Guru. He had earlier vowed during a storm at sea that if spared he would bestow 500 gold mohurs on the Guru and it was in quest of the recipient that he had arrived in Bakala. Baffled by the plethora of claimants, he decided to test them by keeping his vow a secret and by offering each of them two mohurs. Each in turn accepted the gift, leaving Makhan Shah as uncertain as ever. It was then that he learnt of the inconspicuous presence in Bakala of Tegh Bahadur, one of Guru Hargobind's sons. Tegh Bahadur spent his days in secluded contemplation (figure 35). This was the reason for his having earlier been passed over in the succession and for his failure to promote his own candidacy in the present uncertainty. When two mohurs were laid before him he asked why only two were being given when five hundred had been promised (figure 36 inset). Makhan Shah instantly realized that he had found the true Guru and proclaimed his discovery to the village from a rooftop.

After leaving Bakala, the new Guru proceeded first to Amritsar, where he encountered the continuing opposition of the Minas and also of some local *masands*. The latter were regional supervisors acting as tithe-collectors on behalf of the Guru. The system had worked well under earlier Gurus, but it was now becoming evident that many masands had developed notions of independent authority. Kiratpur proved to be little better than Amritsar and eventually Guru Tegh Bahadur built himself a new town at Anandpur, six kilometres from Kiratpur.

Using Anandpur as his base the ninth Guru travelled extensively, visiting his sangats on the Punjab plains and well beyond. An early journey took him as far as Assam and it was there that he received news of his son's birth. Gobind Rai, the future Guru Gobind Singh, was born in

Patna, where Tegh Bahadur had left his wife for her confinement. The child was eventually brought to Anandpur where considerable attention was devoted to his education, both literary and physical.

Meanwhile, clouds were again gathering as the Emperor Aurangzeb's strict Islamic ideals took increasing hold of his administration. Amongst the victims of his policy were the Hindus of Kashmir, now subjected to increasing pressure to convert to Islam. A Brahmin convention summoned to consider the growing threat decided to seek the assistance of the Sikh Guru and a delegation accordingly travelled down to Anandpur. Guru Tegh Bahadur declared that the crisis demanded a martyr of great spiritual stature. Hearing this pronouncement, Gobind Rai asked if there was anyone who possessed stronger credentials than the Guru himself. Guru Tegh Bahadur accepted the child's verdict and pronounced himself ready to go to Delhi. The Emperor was to be informed that the Kashmiri Hindus would accept conversion if the Sikh Guru could first be persuaded to do so.

On reaching Delhi, the Guru was imprisoned and strenuous efforts were made to secure his conversion. When these attempts failed he was taken to Chandni Chowk and there beheaded (figure 36 inset). The Panth had received its second martyr and the possibility of an acceptable relationship with Aurangzeb was now irrevocably destroyed. The battle was delayed by the youth of the Guru who now succeeded his martyred father, but eventually it was to come.

Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708)

Another child now sat on the Guru's *gaddī*, but this was no ordinary child and the man who was to emerge would be no ordinary leader. As we have already seen, Sikh tradition bestows on the tenth Guru a status second only to Baba Nanak himself. It is possible to read the principal events of his adult life as a series of defeats and disasters, mitigated by minor successes and strategic withdrawals but summarized in ultimate failure. Sikh tradition rejects such an interpretation with the utmost vehemence. This is no minor potentate, briefly disturbing an obscure corner of the Mughal empire. This is the mighty Guru Gobind Singh, Lord of the Khalsa, the Tenth King, bearer of the royal plume (kalgi) who wields with

unexampled bravery the strong sword of righteousness. The bazaar prints express in vivid colour and cherished detail the popular Sikh understanding of the last of the personal Gurus.

The new Guru's first duty proved to be the reception of his father's head. A faithful Sikh, taking advantage of a storm which swept the city with the ninth Guru's execution, seized the decapitated head and carried it to Anandpur (figure 36 inset) where it was cremated with due ceremony. Other Sikhs had meanwhile contrived to cremate the Guru's trunk which had also been removed during the storm. This they did by burning their own cluster of houses, concealing from the authorities the fact that the Guru's body was inside one of them. The place of execution in Chandni Chowk is now marked by Gurdwara Sis Ganj (figure 36 inset) and the site of the surreptitious cremation by Gurdwara Rakab Ganj in New Delhi.

As he grew to manhood, the young Guru was accepted as one of the several minor rajas who ruled small principalities in the Shivalik Hills. Part of this period was spent in Anandpur and part at Paunta, a location deeper into the hills on the banks of the Jamuna river. At Paunta the Guru divided his time between the pursuit of literature and the manly sports which would prepare him for his future career as a warrior (figure 11). The two activities were a part of the same education, for the literature of the Paunta period exalts the same themes of physical prowess and heroism.

Relationships with the surrounding rajas, always delicate, eventually led to war during the Paunta period. The principal culprit was the jealous Raja Bhim Chand of Bilaspur, anxious to secure an unusually intelligent elephant which the Guru owned. During his visit to far-distant Assam the ninth Guru had blessed a local ruler who had requested intercession for a son. The son, Rattan Chand, was duly born and when eventually he succeeded his deceased father he visited the Punjab to offer his own thanksgiving. With him he brought as a gift for Guru Gobind Singh a highly-trained elephant which could perform all manner of tricks (figure 40). Raja Bhim Chand coveted this remarkable animal and was enraged by the Guru's prudent refusal to lend it. The incident contributed to the outbreak of actual hostilities in which Bhim Chand was joined by Raja Fateh Shah of Garhwal. The Guru proved to be more than a match for them, decisively defeating the coalition at the Battle of Bhangani in 1688.

Following this battle the victorious Guru returned to Anandpur. Hostilities continued, with shifting alliances and occasional outbreaks of warfare. Each passing year provided further evidence of the young Guru's military strength and of his growing importance amongst the states of the surrounding hills. Meanwhile, four sons were born to him, each to be trained in the same military skills as his father (figure 41).

The crucial event of the tenth Guru's period, indeed the crucial event of all Sikh history, occurred in 1699. Three reasons have been offered for the dramatic action taken by the Guru in 1699. One tradition emphasizes his determination to ensure that his followers would be visibly identifiable as well as loyal. When his father, the ninth Guru, had been taken out for execution, his Sikhs all shrank from recognition. This they were able to do because they looked like anyone else. A second tradition stresses the Guru's conviction that his followers lacked adequate strength because they still adhered to the old ways, symbolized by the ancient practice of *charan-āmrit* (initiation with water in which a guru's toe has been dipped). A new form of initiation was needed, one which would strengthen his Sikhs as finely-tempered steel. The third interpretation bases the Guru's decision on the growing corruption and independence of the masands. A portion of the Panth had always been under the direct supervision of the Guru and, as such, constituted his *khālsā* or 'royal domain'. All were to be required to renounce the masands and affirm direct allegiance to the Guru. In other words, all were to join his Khalsa.

The dramatic event took place on Baisakhi Day (30 March 1699). The Guru had summoned his Sikhs to assemble at Anandpur on that day and it was an expectant crowd which gathered in obedience to his command. On the assembly area a closed tent had been mysteriously pitched. When eventually the Guru rose to address his followers, the words which he uttered brought terror to the hearts of his hearers. 'I want the heads of five Sikhs to offer as a sacrifice', he announced. Horrified silence was the only response. The Guru insistently repeated his request and finally Daya Singh from Lahore agreed to offer his head. He was escorted into the tent and the thud of a falling sword could be heard. When the Guru emerged he carried a blood-stained sword.

The Guru then repeated his request and Dharam Singh, a landowner, offered to be the second victim. The procedure was repeated and the

Guru returned with more blood on his sword. Each time he uttered his demand another volunteer came forward, five in all. The Guru then drew back the side of the tent to reveal to his startled audience the five Sikhs all unharmed. At their feet lay five decapitated goats. The five volunteers were clad in garments resembling those of the Guru and each was armed with a sword. They were then presented to the assembled Panth as the Cherished Five (*pañj piāre*), the nucleus of the new community about to be formed.

Next morning the crowd reassembled and the Guru took his seat on an impressive throne. Water was poured into a large iron vessel and the Cherished Five were instructed to stand before it. While Guru Nanak's *Japjī* was recited Guru Gobind Singh stirred the sanctified water (*amrit*) with a two-edged sword held vertically. As he was performing this ritual one of his wives, Mata Jito, cast soluble sweets into the water (figures 12 and 43).

Next, the Guru took amrit on the tip of his sword and five times he let a portion of the water run from the sword onto his face. He then applied amrit to each of the Cherished Five in the following manner. Five times he poured amrit into the recipient's cupped hand. Five times he applied it to his hair, and five times he sprinkled it on his eyes. The five initiates were required to eat a portion of karah prasad, each portion taken from the same iron pan. Finally, the Guru promulgated the *Rahit* (the code of conduct which all initiated members of the newly-constituted Khalsa were to observe).

Thus did Guru Gobind Singh found the Khalsa, performing the ceremony which was thereafter to be the formal initiation for all who sought membership and declaring the Rahit which all initiated members were to obey. The Rahit would ensure that any Sikh of the Khalsa could be instantly recognizable, for it imposed on all who accepted it the obligation to observe such visible conventions as the celebrated 'Five Ks' (the uncut hair, sword, breeches, comb and steel bangle). All who entered the Khalsa were to add 'Singh' to their names in the case of men, 'Kaur' in the case of women. Meat could be eaten only if the animal had been killed with a single blow (as opposed to the slower method required by Muslim ritual); tobacco was rigorously proscribed; and within the new community caste practices were to be renounced.[75] By such observances the Khalsa was to

be known, and as a faithful army it was to serve the Guru in whatever battle might lie ahead. The tradition born at Anandpur on Baisakhi Day 1699 has remained a powerful impulse ever since, reflected in such pictures as figure 44.

The spirit thus formalized in the founding of the Khalsa was soon to be put to the test. The jealous hill rajas remained unreconciled to the Guru and after some preliminary skirmishes they joined forces to attack Anandpur in 1701. On this occasion their prize weapon was an elephant which had been trained to wield a mighty sword with its trunk. Protected with heavy iron shields and inflamed with intoxicants, the rampaging creature threatened to batter down the gates of Lohgarh, one of the two fortresses within Anandpur. A famous warrior, Bachitra Singh, was dispatched by the Guru to deal with the monster. Such was the force of his lance that it pierced the elephant's frontal shield and penetrated its forehead (figure 45). The crazed brute, squealing with pain, turned on its own army and with threshing sword ran amok amongst the rajas' troops. The havoc it caused was so serious that the rajas were forced to raise their siege and depart.

It was, however, only a temporary withdrawal. The skirmishing continued and eventually a Mughal force from Sirhind joined the fray. Directed by Vazir Khan, the governor of Sirhind, the Mughal army laid siege to Anandpur in 1704 and by maintaining a tight cordon for several months it brought the garrison to the point of starvation. Many of the Guru's followers, ground down by the privations of the siege, renounced their allegiance to him and departed. Those who remained were ordered to prepare for evacuation.

On the night of 20–21 December 1704 the surviving garrison broke out of Anandpur and those who survived an early-morning Mughal attack managed to secure and fortify a house in the village of Chamkaur. Again they were besieged and this time the attackers were determined to secure their objective. The Guru's two elder sons were killed during the attack and it seemed that the same fate must await the Guru himself. His surviving followers insisted, however, that he must be preserved and under cover of darkness he was able to slip through the Mughal cordon.

Travelling alone, the Guru eventually found himself in the Machhiwara jungle (figure 47 inset). There he was discovered by other Sikhs who had

escaped and was given shelter by the headman of the neighbouring town. After leaving Machhiwara the Guru evaded his Mughal pursuers by pretending to be a Sufi pir from the distant town of Uch. Soon after this escape he learnt of Vazir Khan's most despicable act. The Guru's two younger sons, captured with their mother following the evacuation of Anandpur, had been delivered to Vazir Khan. Having offered the two children the usual choice between conversion to Islam and death the merciless governor ordered them to be bricked up alive in the city wall. As we have already noted, the cruel execution remains a vivid memory amongst the Sikh people and figures prominently in the bazaar prints of today (figure 46).

Moving on to Khidrana in Firozpur district the Guru gathered his scattered force again and another battle took place. Amongst the slain were forty Sikhs who had earlier renounced the Guru's service but who had returned to him in shame and now sealed their restored loyalty in death. Ever since, they have been remembered as the Forty Liberated (*chālī mukte*). From Khidrana (or Muktsar as it came to be known) the Guru moved on to Talvandi Sabo (Bhatinda district), known thereafter to the Sikhs as Damdama Sahib. While he was there Aurangzeb died, preparing the way for a break in hostilities.

Many anecdotes are related of the period covering the Guru's travels from Anandpur to Damdama Sahib. On one occasion shortly after the Battle of Muktsar he is said to have shot a partridge, plucked it, and cast it before his falcon. After some hesitation the falcon began to eat the dead bird (figure 47 inset). The partridge, explained the Guru, had been a cultivator in its last incarnation and the falcon had been a moneylender. The cultivator, having borrowed funds from the moneylender, had squandered them. When the moneylender demanded his due payment the cultivator asked for more time, citing the Guru as his surety. The debt remained unpaid, however, and eventually both died. Reincarnated as partridge and falcon they had been brought together again so that the debtor could pay what he owed. The Guru, acting as guarantor, had ensured that this would be done. All who make similar promises in the Guru's name should remember that eventually they will be compelled to pay their debts.

On an earlier occasion, following his escape from Machhiwara, the

Guru was given hospitality in the village of Jatpura (Ludhiana district) by a Muslim official called Rai Kalha. It was while staying with Rai Kalha that the Guru learnt of the fate of his two younger sons. Before leaving he presented Rai Kalha with a sword, adding that it was never to be used. It was to be retained as an honoured memento. Rai Kalha and his son both respected the Guru's command, but his grandson ignored it and used the sword for hunting. The Guru's instructions cannot thus be mocked. While attempting to slay a stag the grandson accidentally struck himself with the sword and died of his self-inflicted wound (figure 47 inset).

A break in hostilities occurred after the death of Aurangzeb as the new emperor, Bahadur Shah, adopted a very different attitude towards the Sikhs. Bahadur Shah was well disposed towards his father's enemy and invited the Guru to join him on an expedition to the Deccan. There were, however, Mughals who still bore him enmity. Vazir Khan dispatched a hired assassin to kill the Guru and it was in Nanded that the attempt was made. The Guru was only wounded, but some days later the unhealed wound re-opened when he attempted to draw a new bow. Efforts to save him failed and he died at Nanded on 7 October 1708. The spot is marked by Gurdwara Sach-khand Sri Hazur Sahib (figure 50). Before his death he declared that the line of personal Gurus would now end and that the eternal Guru's authority would thereafter reside in the sacred scripture (the Guru Granth) and the gathered community (the Guru Panth).

After the Gurus

The Guru's death demanded vengeance and the avenging leader who now emerged was one only recently converted to the Panth. This was Banda Bahadur, a former ascetic who had first met Guru Gobind Singh in the vicinity of Nanded. As we have already noted, Banda is one of the surprising omissions from the popular art of the Sikhs. Following his Master's death he travelled up to the Punjab and, after assaulting Sirhind, he troubled the Mughal authorities for several years before his final defeat and execution in 1716.

Although the Mughals succeeded in putting down Banda's rebellion their authority was soon to crumble in the Punjab. In 1747 Ahmad Shah Abdali descended from Kabul and for more than twenty years the Punjab

was periodically plagued with Afghan invasions. These years loom large in Sikh tradition as an extension of the heroic example set by the tenth Guru. The Afghans might enjoy overwhelming superiority of numbers, but ultimately they were to prove no match for the Khalsa. Organizing themselves in separate groups known as *misls*, the Sikhs waged unrelenting war against the foreign invaders. The tradition certainly does not relate a tale of endless victories, but it is rich in stories of Sikh bravery and of unflinching loyalty to the memory of the Guru.

It was during this period that Baba Dip Singh emerged to brief prominence and immemorial fame (figure 52). The Afghans under Jahan Khan had seized Amritsar in 1756 and were busy desecrating Harimandir Sahib. When news reached the Khalsa troops who had withdrawn south of the Satluj river Baba Dip Singh gathered 500 horsemen and left Damdama Sahib for Amritsar. As he proceeded northwards in late 1757 his army continued to grow until eventually it numbered 5000. The Afghan force, however, consisted of 8000 men and this force confronted the advancing Khalsa south of Amritsar. The ensuing battle was a fierce one, fought over several kilometres of territory. It was near the village of Chabba, eight kilometres south of Amritsar, that Dip Singh's head was cut off. As we have already noted, the tradition divides at this point. Figure 53 illustrates the dominant and ever-popular version. Dip Singh, holding his head in one hand, continued to fight as a decapitated trunk until he finally succumbed at Ramsar pool on the outskirts of Amritsar.

Successful against the Afghan invader, the various misls subsequently began fighting amongst themselves. Out of this turmoil of the late eighteenth century one misl leader eventually emerged as supreme. This was Ranjit Singh of the Shukerchakia misl, now to be recognized as Maharaja of the Punjab. Ranjit Singh, as we have already seen, produced a response from nineteenth-century artists which curiously has not been emulated with the same vigour by their twentieth-century successors. The four decades of his rule nevertheless provide the golden period of Sikh statecraft and the Maharaja himself remains a conspicuously popular folk-hero.

The death of Ranjit Singh in 1839 was followed at the court of Lahore by a rapid descent into chaos, by two wars with the encroaching British, and by the final annexation of the Punjab in 1849. Two themes emerge

during the century-long British period which then follows. One concerns the British-inspired theory of the 'martial races of India', a myth sedulously encouraged as a means of providing the Indian Army with a regular supply of reliable recruits. The martial traditions of the Khalsa more than matched the myth and the British placed considerable emphasis on the recruitment of Sikh soldiers.

The second theme, this one anti-British in nature, also contributed to the sustaining of the Khalsa tradition. Whereas the Singh Sabha had caused the British little anxiety, its successor, the Akali movement, proved to be a considerable problem during the early nineteen-twenties. In the struggle to free the gurdwaras from corrupt incumbents the Akalis performed deeds and undertook sacrifices which added another chapter to Sikh tradition.

The book still remains open and the record continues to be written. Independent India has been well served by the Sikhs, but there remains within the Panth a widespread belief that India has yet to offer the Sikhs an appropriate response. An appropriate response is one which will recognize the special religious beliefs of the Sikhs, their contribution to the productive capacity of the Punjab, and their share in the continuing defence of India. In particular it must be one which grants the Sikhs a greater degree of autonomy in their own territory of the Punjab. As this latest chapter unfolds it will doubtless find expression in the popular art of the Sikhs.

Notes

Abbreviations

B40: *The B40 Janam-sākhī*, translated with introduction and annotations by W. H. McLeod. Amritsar, 1980.
ESC: W. H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*. Delhi, 1975; Oxford, 1976.
EST: W. H. McLeod, *Early Sikh Tradition: A Study of the Janam-sakhis*. Oxford, 1980.
GNSR: W. H. McLeod, *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*. Oxford, 1968; Delhi, 1976.
MK: Kahn Singh Nabha, *Guruśabad Ratanākar Mahān Koś*. 2nd edition revised with addendum, Patiala, 1960.
PPHC: *Proceedings of the Punjab History Conference*.
TSSS: *Textual Source for the Study of Sikhism*, translated and edited by W. H.McLeod. Manchester, 1984.

1. W. G. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*. London, 1966, p. 18.
2. *EST*, chap. 3. *ESC*, chap. 2.
3. *EST*, pp. 82, 118–20.
4. T. W. Arnold, *Painting in Islam*. New York, 1965, p. 112.
5. Fauja Singh, 'A Study of the Paintings of Guru Nanak' in *Papers on Guru Nanak*, *PPHC 1969*. Patiala, 1970, pp. 152–3.
6. *B40*, Intro. p. 1.
7. The artist's name is Alam Chand Raj and the likely location is in or near Gujranwala district in Pakistan. *B40*, pp. 7–8, 20–3. S. S. Hans, 'Sikh Painting', *PPHC 1980*, Patiala, 1981, pp. 105–8. All the illustrations from the *B40 Janam-sākhī* have been reproduced in colour in Surjit Hans (ed.), *B–40 Janamsakhi Guru Baba Nanak Paintings*. Amritsar, 1987.
8. See below p. 69.
9. M. S. Randhawa, 'Paintings of the Sikh Gurus in the Collection of Mahant of Gurdwara Ram Rai, Dehradun', *Roopa-lekha* XXXIX.1, pp. 13–20. The article is liberally illustrated.
10. Ibid., p. 18.
11. Fauja Singh, pp. 155–6.
12. This interpretation is persuasively argued by B. N. Goswamy, 'A Matter of Taste: Some Notes on the Context of Painting in Sikh Punjab', *Marg* XXXIV.1 (Maharaja Ranjit Singh issue), pp. 45–62.
13. F. S. Aijazuddin, *Pahari Paintings and Sikh Portraits in the Lahore Museum*. London, 1977, p. xxvii. Archer, pp. 18–26.
14. Ibid., p. 26.
15. Schoefft's experiences in Lahore and the works which he executed there are described by Archer, pp. 44–9. Examples are given in figures 43–5. For examples of Emily Eden's drawings, see figures 26, 42 and 49. For Vigne's drawing of Sher Singh, see figure 39.

16. S. S. Dosanj and Rao Uttam Singh, 'A Dated Janam Sakhi of Guru Nanak', *Roopa-lekha* XXXIX.1, pp. 7–12.
17. Mohan Singh, 'An Illustrated Janamsakhi in the Guler Style', *PPHC 1969*. Patiala, 1970, pp. 106–8. Anon., ' Janam Sakhis: A Guler Series', *Marg* XXX.3 (June 1977), pp. 58–9. Goswamy, p. 62.
18. M. S. Randhawa, 'Sikh Painting', *Roopa-lekha* XXXIX.1, p. 23.
19. The portraits belong to a set purchased by the Lahore Museum in 1914. Three of the ten portraits were sent to India in 1947. Aijazuddin, p. 35. Aijazuddin supplies black and white reproductions of the seven portraits which remain in Lahore. Ibid., Guler illustrations 47 (i)–(vii). Randhawa, 'Sikh Painting', p. 21, reproduces the portrait of Guru Gobind Singh, one of the three now held by the Chandigarh Museum. All ten are reproduced in colour in *Marg* XXXIV.1, pp. 55–8. Archer, figures 1–6, reproduces six paintings from a different Guler series (Mohan Singh collection). The two portraits of Guru Nanak are very similar. Bala has, however, disappeared from the Mohan Singh painting and an unidentified interlocutor has been replaced by Guru Gobind Singh.
20. Archer, p. 125 and figure 7.
21. Randhawa, 'Sikh Painting', p. 25.
22. Ibid., Randhawa, pp. 30–1, reproduces two examples from the volume.
23. Ibid., pp. 25–7. Randhawa reproduces four of the Una janam-sakhi illustrations, three of them in colour. The illustrations, detached from the text and mounted separately, are now on display at the National Museum in New Delhi. Fauja Singh, p. 155.
24. W. Barr, *Journal of a March from Delhi to Peshawur*. London, 1844, pp. 69–71. C. A. von Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Panjab*. London, 1845, p. 250. Archer, pp. 81, 87. Goswamy, pp. 47–8.
25. For a description of some of the murals still in existence, see Kanwarjit Kang, 'Survivals of Wall Paintings in Amritsar', *Marg* XXX.3 (June 1977), p. 46.
26. This paragraph and the two following are largely based on Kanwarjit Singh Kang, 'Wall Painting under the Sikhs', *Marg* XXXIV.1, pp. 35–43.
27. M. S. Randhawa, 'Sikh Painting', p. 26.
28. Kanwarjit Singh Kang, 'Wall Painting under the Sikhs', pp. 35, 39, 41. The Ram Tatwali murals also include an interesting painting of Ranjit Singh with his Dogra retinue. Ibid., p. 42.
29. Ibid., p. 36.
30. Kanwarjit Kang, 'Art and Architecture of the Golden Temple', *Marg* XXX.3, p. 24 and figure 52. Kang adds: 'Initially, the disappearance of murals started at the close of the nineteenth century, when devotees were permitted to present contributions in the form of inlaid marble slabs, which were fixed on the walls painted with frescoes. The old Bungas of the Golden Temple, which have been demolished, were repositories of splendid paintings.' Ibid., p. 35.
31. Archer, pp. 65–6.
32. For examples, see Archer, figures 61–4.
33. Mildred Archer, *Company Drawings in the India Office Library*. London, 1972, p. 209.
34. An early example of the integrated group preserved in Una shows Guru Nanak seated beneath his royal tree surrounded by five named companions. *Roopa-lekha* XXXIX.1, p. 29. Randhawa dates this painting *c.* 1835. The integrated group format is much older than the Anglo-Mughal style and although there may well have been an importing of the convention from Delhi in *c.* 1842 this was obviously not its first appearance in the Punjab. Arnold, noting the existence of the format in early Muslim art, calls it a 'Santa Conversazione'. T. W. Arnold, *Painting in Islam*, p. 97 and plate XXII. Note also the mid-seventeenth century example which appears as the frontispiece to Karine Schomer and W. H. McLeod (eds), *The Sants: Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India*. Berkeley and Delhi, 1987.
35. Mulk Raj Anand, 'Painting and Prayer: A Note on Hieratic Pictorial Art under the Sikhs', *Marg* XXX.3, p. 45.
36. Mildred Archer, p. 210.

37. For examples of Kehar Singh's work, see *Marg* XXX.3, p. 65; and *Roopa-lekha* XXXIX.1, p. 36. See also ibid., pp. 29–31 for a note on Kehar Singh and other Sikh artists working in the same style.
38. The Singh Sabha movement was a response to Western intellectual and religious challenges and to perceived decay in Sikh belief and practice. In 1873 the first Singh Sabha (Singh Society) was formed in Amritsar, followed by another in Lahore six years later. Others subsequently appeared in areas populated by Sikhs and in 1902 an attempt was made to unify the movement under an umbrella organization called the Chief Khalsa Diwan. The Singh Sabha emphasized the recovery of Sikh values as enunciated by the Gurus, disseminating its message through newspapers, books, schools and preachers. Its strength declined with the rise of the activist Akali movement from 1920 onwards. For detail, see N. Gerald Barrier, *The Sikhs and their Literature*. Delhi, 1970, pp. *xviii–xlv*; Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, vol. 2. Princeton, 1966, chap. 13.
39. W. G. Archer, figures 108–10. Archer's title 'Twelve Heroes of the Sikhs' is perhaps inappropriate. Akali Phula Singh and the Atariwala sardars certainly qualify for the title, but Gulab Singh is dubious to say the least and Dost Muhammad of Kabul is plainly inappropriate. A better title would be 'Maharaja Ranjit Singh and associates'. Had the original ivories been intended for Sikh customers rather than a British market the choice might well have been different.
40. W. G. Archer, p. 69, and figure 111.
41. The man beside the horse may possibly be the Mughal official (*karoṛī*) who according to the janam-sakhis found himself unable to remain on his horse while approaching Guru Nanak. *B40*, pp. 80–1. See below p. 54.
42. W. G. Archer, pp. 65–6, and figure 62.
43. K. C. Aryan reproduces Puran Singh's miniature, together with a note on the artist, in *Roopa-lekha* XXXIX.1, pp. 36–7 (figure 6). The miniature also appears in idem, *Punjab Painting*. Patiala, 1975, plate 28.
44. For a collection of contemporary or slightly earlier Bengali woodcut prints, see G. Shaw's note 'Calcutta Woodcuts in OMPB [British Library]' in IOLR & OMPB Newsletter no.33 (December 1984), pp. 8–9. The majority of the OMPB collection were evidently acquired by the early 1870s.
45. Nath yogis commonly carried a caged parrot. Kahn Singh Nabha, *Gurumat Mārtand*. Amritsar, 1962, p. 409n.
46. Traditionally representing the assumption of worldly authority (*mīrī*) as well as spiritual (*pīrī*).
47. *EST*, pp. 21–2, 37–9.
48. Two families served as artists and decorators in the Golden Temple and its environs from the time of Ranjit Singh onwards. These were the families of Kehar Singh and Jawala Singh. Mehtab Singh (b.1871) was the son of the latter. In addition to his work in Gurdwara Baba Atal Rai Sahib and the Golden Temple itself he also served as an artist in the gurdwaras of Tarn Taran and Goindval. Narinderjit Singh, *Around the Golden Temple*. Amritsar, 1977, p. 3. The attribution to Mehtab Singh has not been definitively established.
49. Kanwarjit Kang, 'Gurdwara Baba Atal', *Marg* XXX.3, p. 39.
50. Ibid, p. 41. In November 1972 a professional photographer, Mr Bury Peerless of Birchington in Kent, took colour transparencies of ten of the panels before they were restored.
51. Amrita Sher-gil was the daughter of Umrao Singh Sher-gil (scion of a distinguished Sikh family) and a Hungarian mother. She trained in Paris where she was strongly influenced by French masters, particularly Gaugin. Following her return to India she renounced foreign influences and became an 'ardent traditionalist', producing work reminiscent of Rajasthani and Pahari styles. N. Iqbal Singh, *Amrita Sher-gil: A Biography*. New Delhi, 1984.
52. Kahn Singh Nabha, *Guruśabad Ratanākar Mahān Koś*. Patiala, 1931; 2nd rev. ed. Patiala, 1960, and subsequent reprints. Two of the portraits depict ancestors of Kahn Singh's princely patrons. The remainder are all of figures from the Sikh kingdom, most of them presented as a 'Heroes of the Sikhs' set of oval portraits. Kahn Singh's English associate M. A. Macauliffe had earlier included

drawings of the Gurus in *The Sikh Religion* (Oxford, 1909). Although his artist, Lal Singh Musavvar, was a Sikh patronised by the heir to the princely state of Nabha the style which emerges represents the expectations of an English client rather than any recognizable Punjabi style. There is an obvious attempt to sustain the courtly Anglo-Mughal form, but it is heavily influenced by European example. It would come as no surprise to discover that Lal Singh had received his training in one of the art schools established by the British. His work is neat, clear and lifeless.

53. Kahn Singh Nabha, *Gurumat Mārtaṇḍ*. Amritsar, 1962, pp. 408–9. *Gurumat Mārtaṇḍ* was prepared in 1938, largely on the basis of Kahn Singh's earlier works *Gurmat Prabhākar* (1898), *Gurmat Sudhākar* (1899) and *Gur Girā Kasauṭī* (prep. 1899 but never published). *MK*, Intro. to second ed., p. 21.
54. *TSSS*, pp. 16,134–6.
55. Several of Kirpal Singh's scenes from Sikh history were prominently on view in the museum attached to the Golden Temple prior to its destruction during the army attack in June 1984. For his Baba Dip Singh see Narinderjit Singh, facing p. 18.
56. Foreword to V. G. Vitsaxis, *Hindu Epics, Myths and Legends in Popular Illustrations*. Delhi, 1977, p. ix.
57. B. H. Baden-Powell, *Handbook of Manufactures and Arts of the Punjab*. Lahore, 1872, p. 354. Cited by W. G. Archer, p. 61.
58. I owe this explanation to Harjot Singh Oberoi. Several versions of this head-and-shoulders portrait have appeared in recent years, all bearing the reference to Guru Har Krishan which is included in Ardas (the Sikh Prayer). For a translation of Ardas, see *TSSS*, pp. 103–5.
59. See below p. 76.
60. *EST*, pp. 66–70, 144–58.
61. See above p. 56.
62. *EST*, pp. 172–3.
63. *GNSR*, pp. 196–9.
64. *TSSS*, pp. 37–8. *ESC*, pp. 44–5.
65. See, for example, the portrait of Maharaja Bhupendra Singh in *MK*, p. 735.
66. The divine Name (*nām*, *satinām*) is 'the total expression of all that God is' (*GNSR*, p. 196). For descriptions and analyses of the doctrine of the *nām*, see *TSSS*, pp. 39–41; and *GNSR*, pp. 195–6.
67. An example from the earlier period is provided by the Baba Atal Rai frescoes. In the panel depicting Baba Nanak's reception in the Divine Court the presence of the formless Akal Purakh is represented by a radiant egg surmounted by the *ik-oṅkār* symbol. The panel appears as figure XLVI in Gene R. Thursby, forthcoming.
68. M. A. Macauliffe includes in *The Sikh Religion* a photograph of an Akali wearing in his turban two different versions of the Khalsa emblem (*loc cit.*, vol. 6, facing p. 36). These versions may indicate that the emblem was still evolving at the beginning of the twentieth century.
69. *TSSS*, p. 80.
70. Precisely because it is a mantra the formula is exceedingly difficult to translate satisfactorily. *Satinām* (usually transcribed as *Satnām*) means 'the divine Name which is truth'; and *Vāhigurū*, which once meant 'Praise to the Guru', is now the popular word for 'God'. For *satinām*, see above note 66. For the etymology and developing usage of *Vāhigurū*, see *B40*, pp. 45–6. The ship represents the Guru as the means whereby a devout person is carried across the dread 'Ocean of Existence' to the eternal safety of the further shore. The figure is one which recurs in the Guru Granth Sahib.
71. Appropriate works are listed in the bibliography.
72. The classic statement of the traditional history of the Gurus' period remains M. A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion* (Oxford, 6 vols, 1909) and readers who seek an extended version of the traditional narrative (as opposed to scholarly history) are referred to this work. Several of the more important

incidents appear in *TSSS*, chap. 2. For the traditional account of the life of Guru Gobind Singh, see Ishar Singh Nara, *Safar Nama and Zafar Nama*. Delhi, 1985.

73. *EST*, pp. 8–12.
74. For a discussion of the origins of this interesting story, see *EST*, pp. 92–3.
75. For a translation of the Rahit as currently promulgated, see *TSSS*, pp. 79–86.

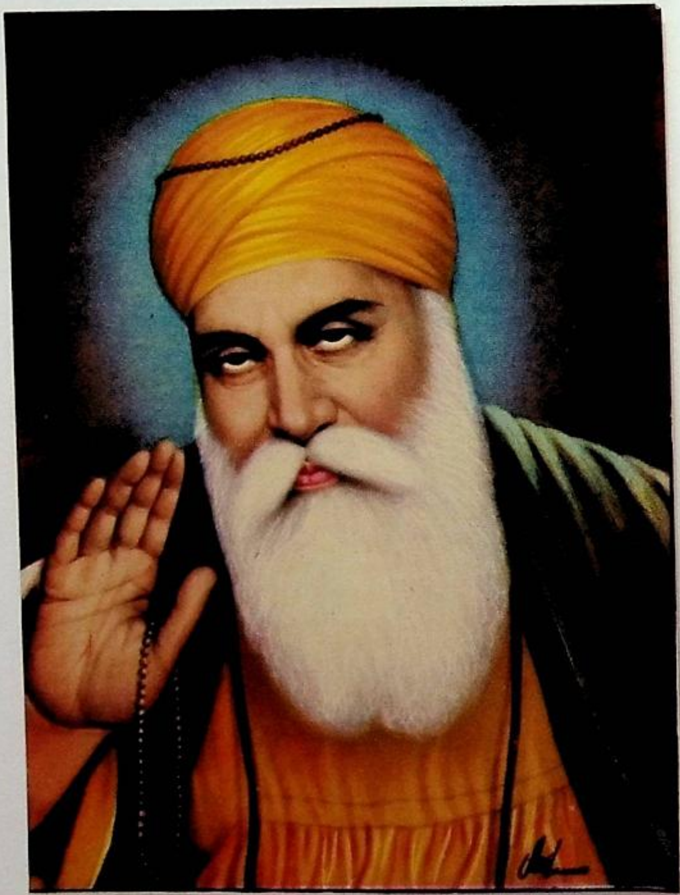


Fig. 15

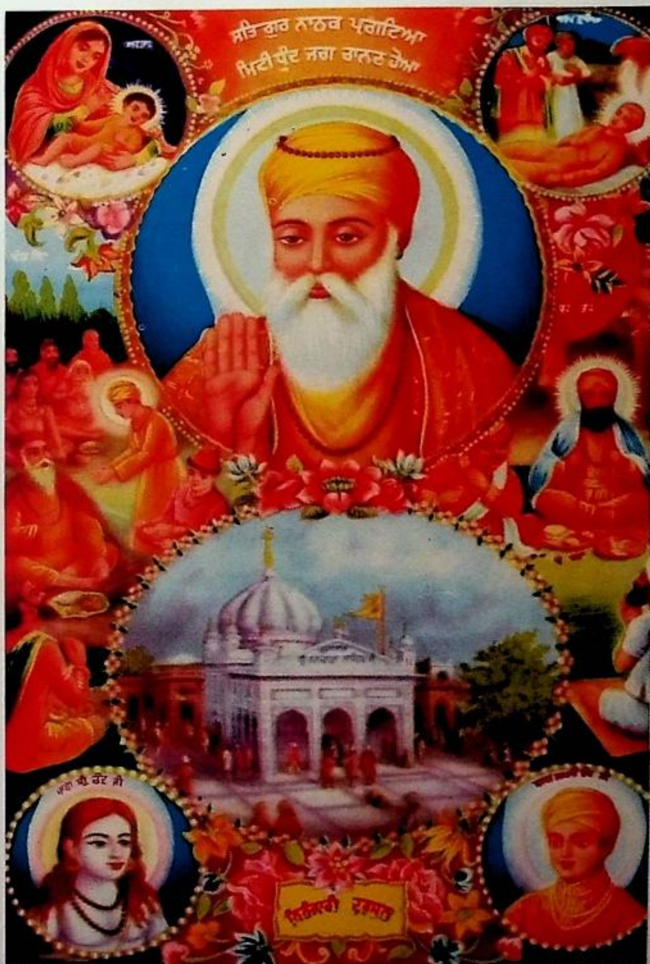


Fig. 16

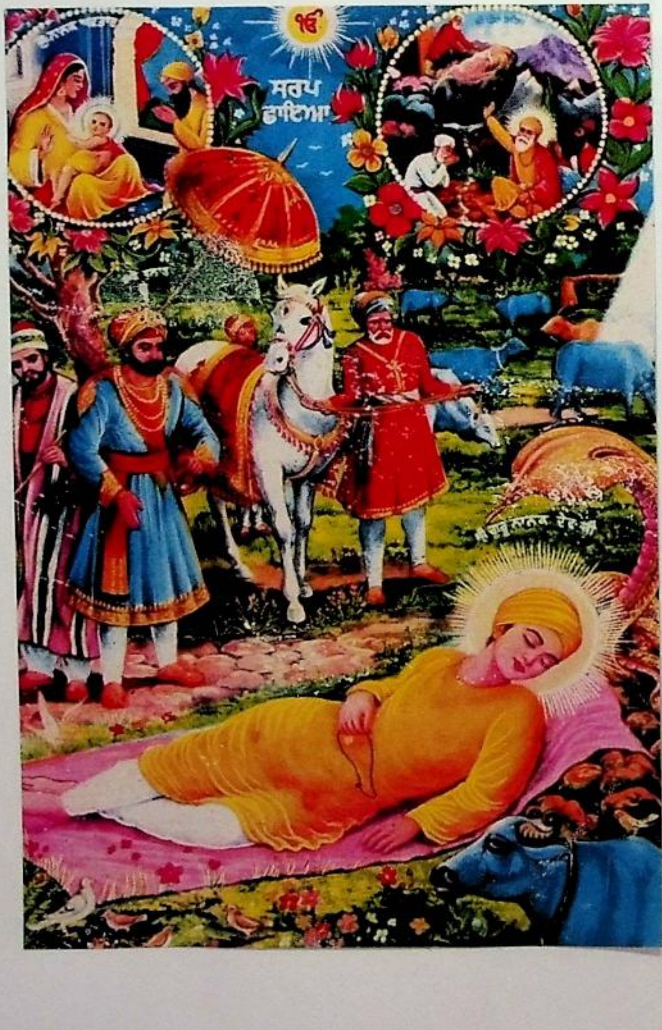


Fig. 17

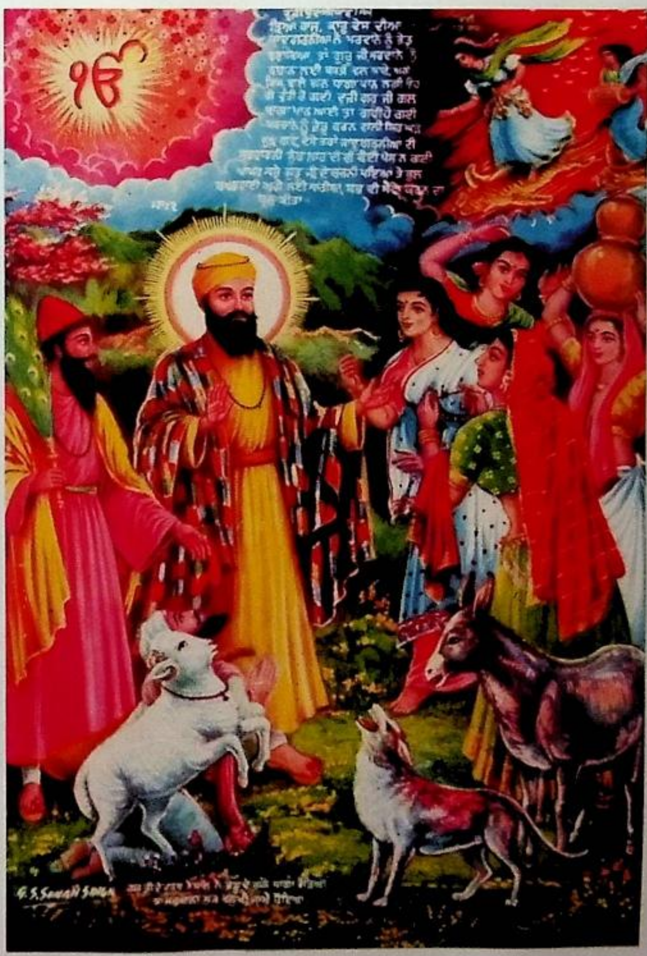


Fig. 18

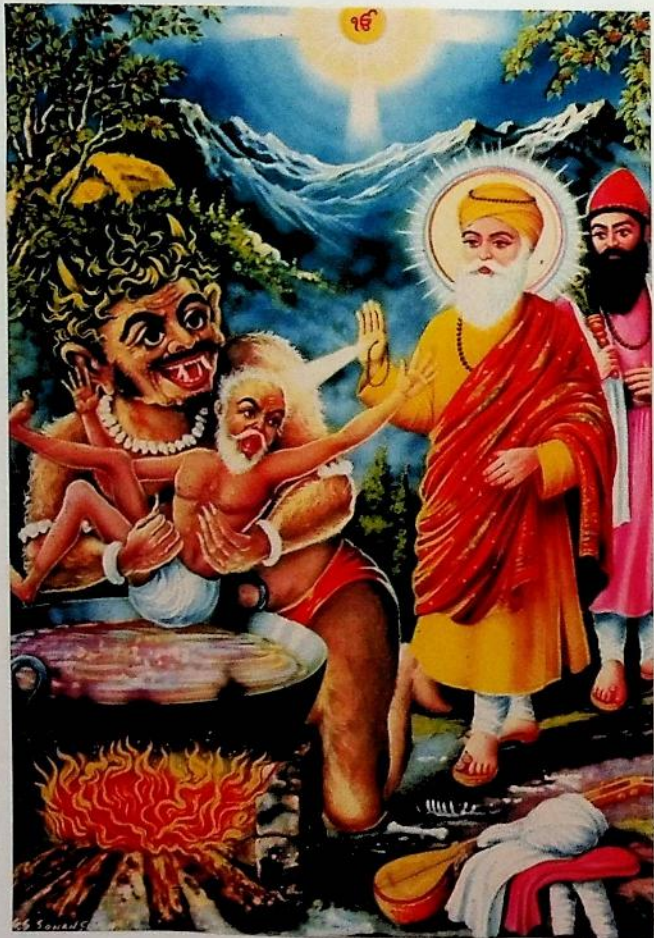


Fig. 19



Fig. 20

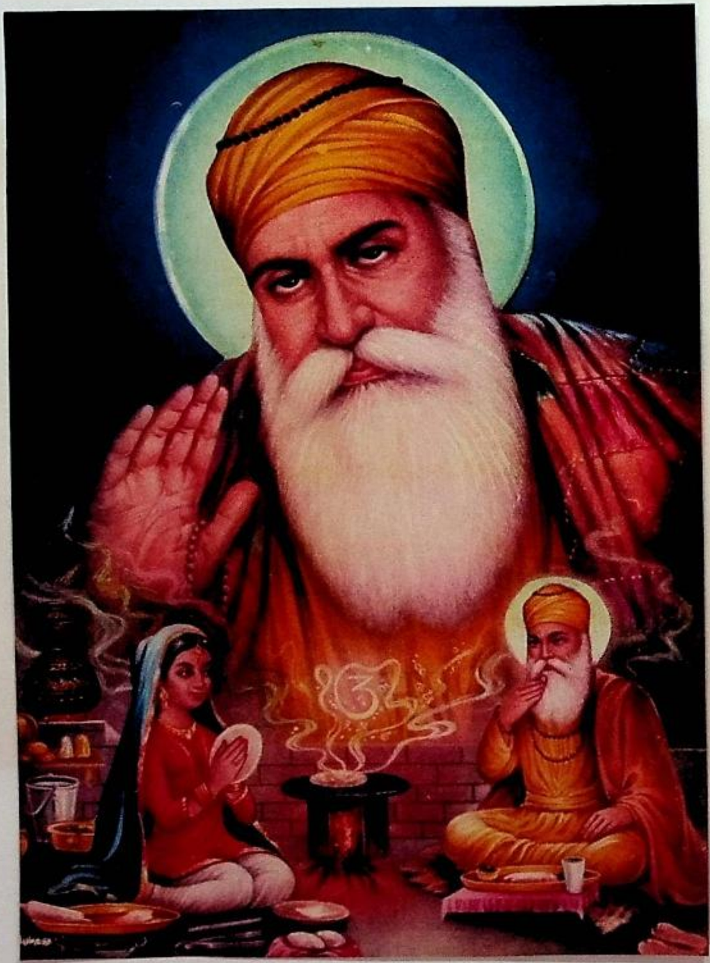


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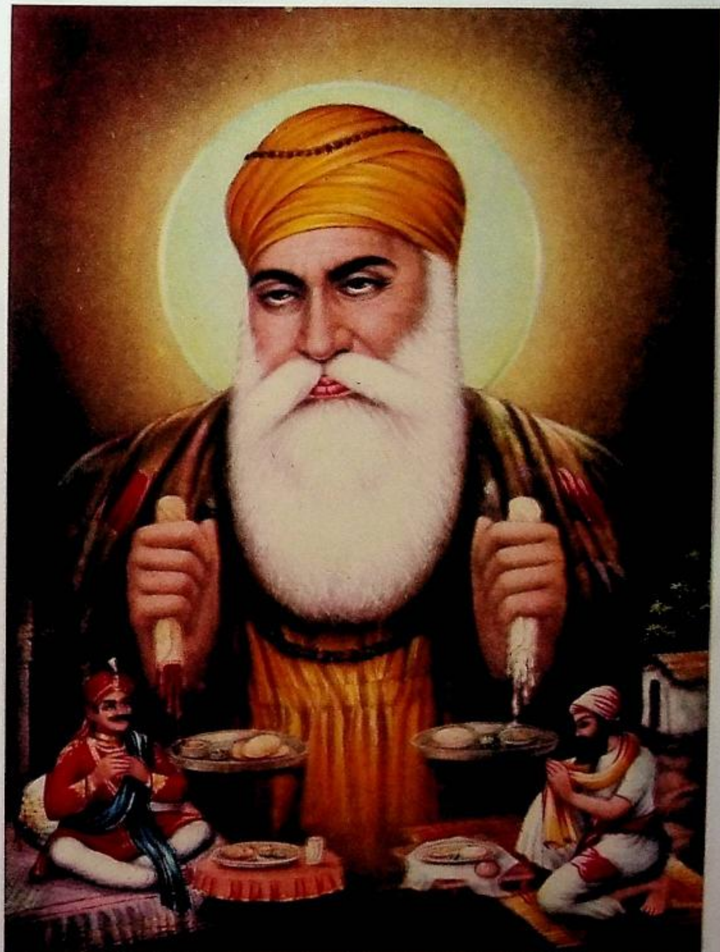


Fig. 22



Fig. 23

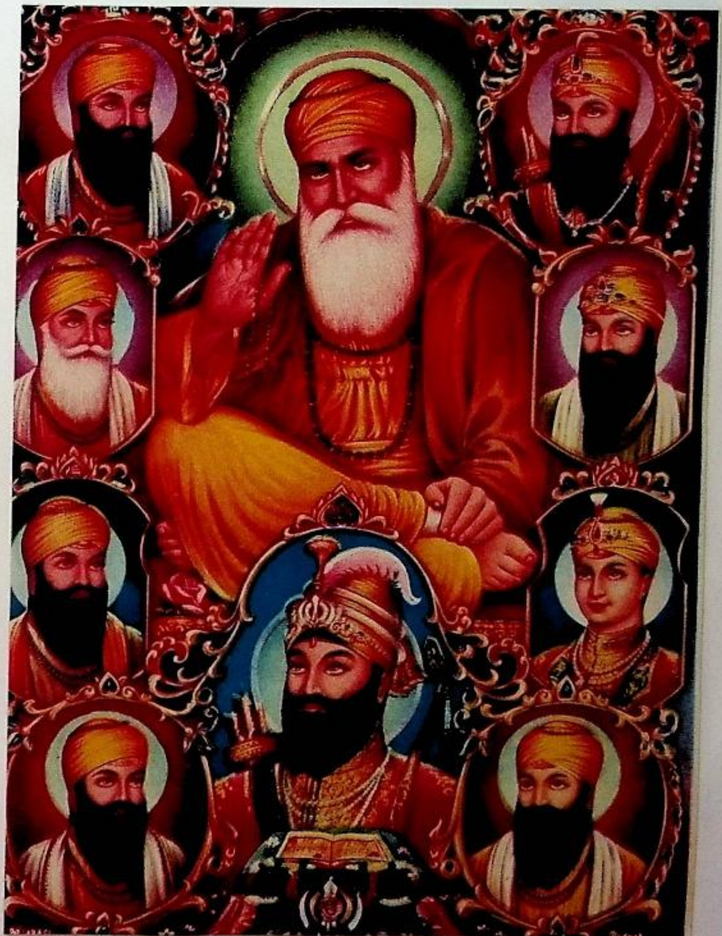


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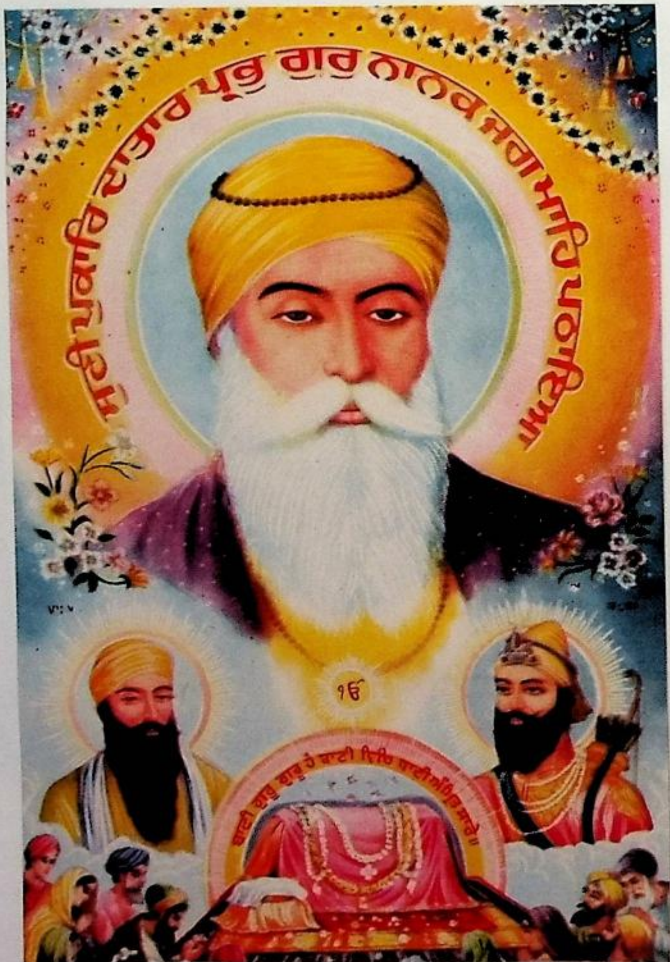


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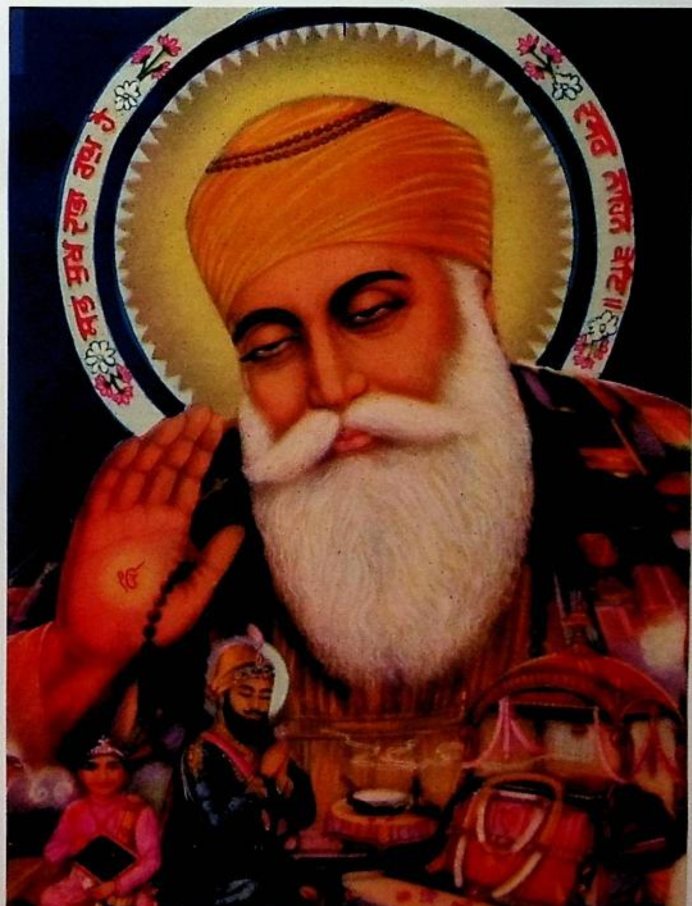


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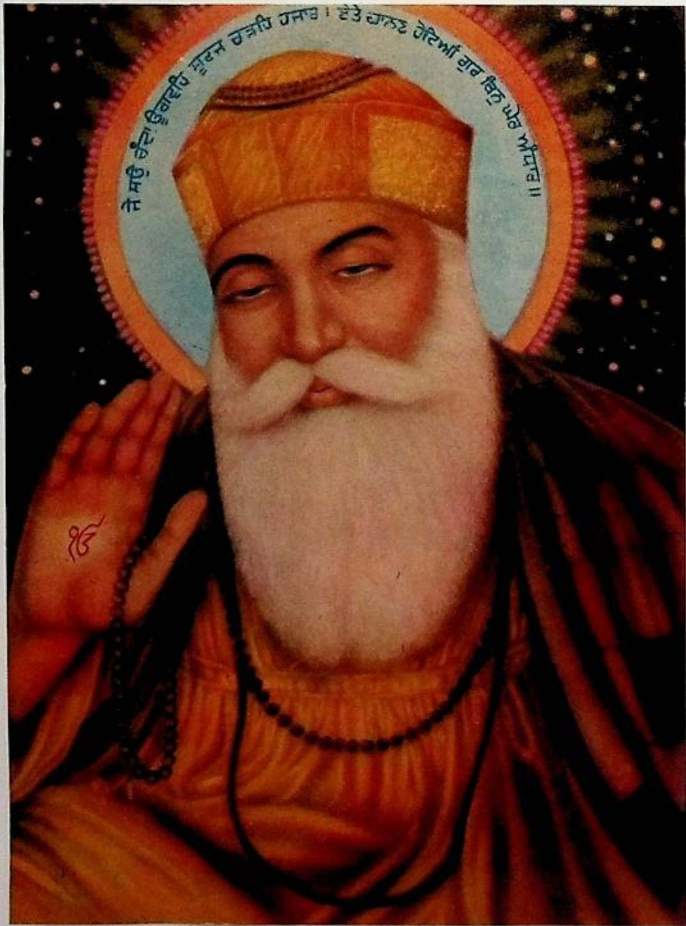


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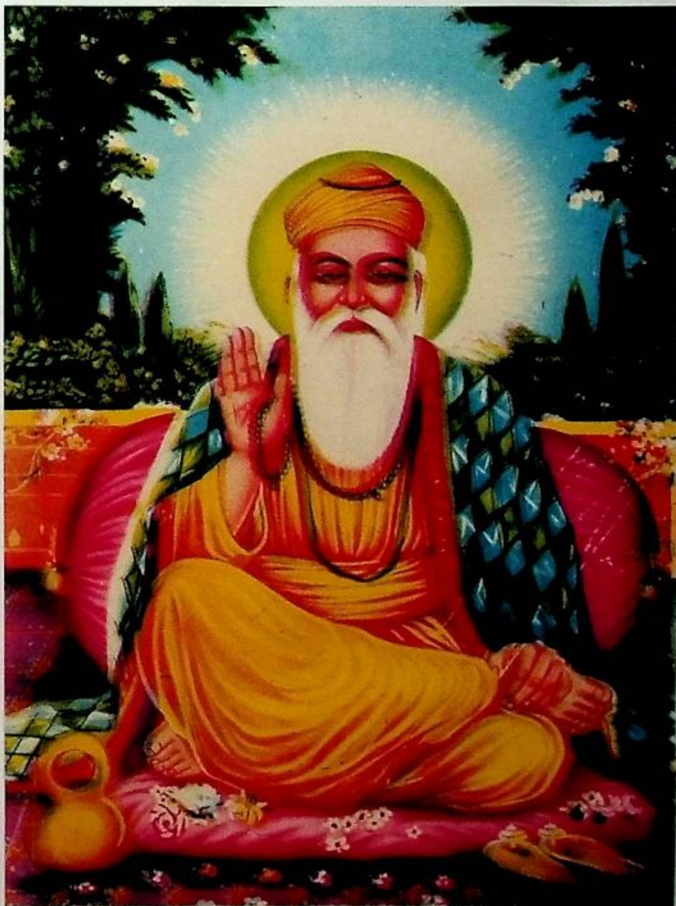


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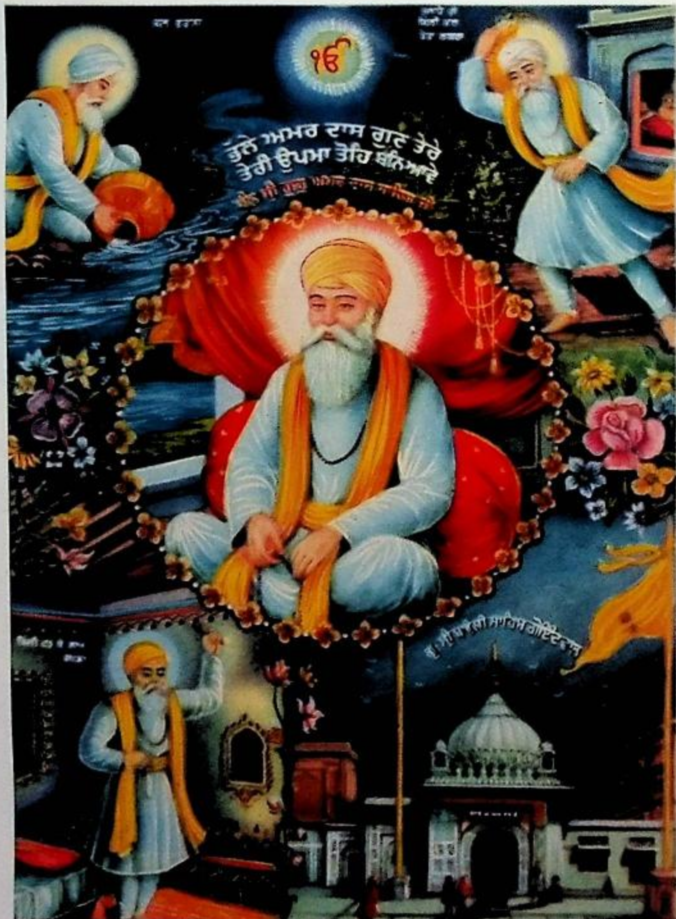


Fig. 29



Fig. 30

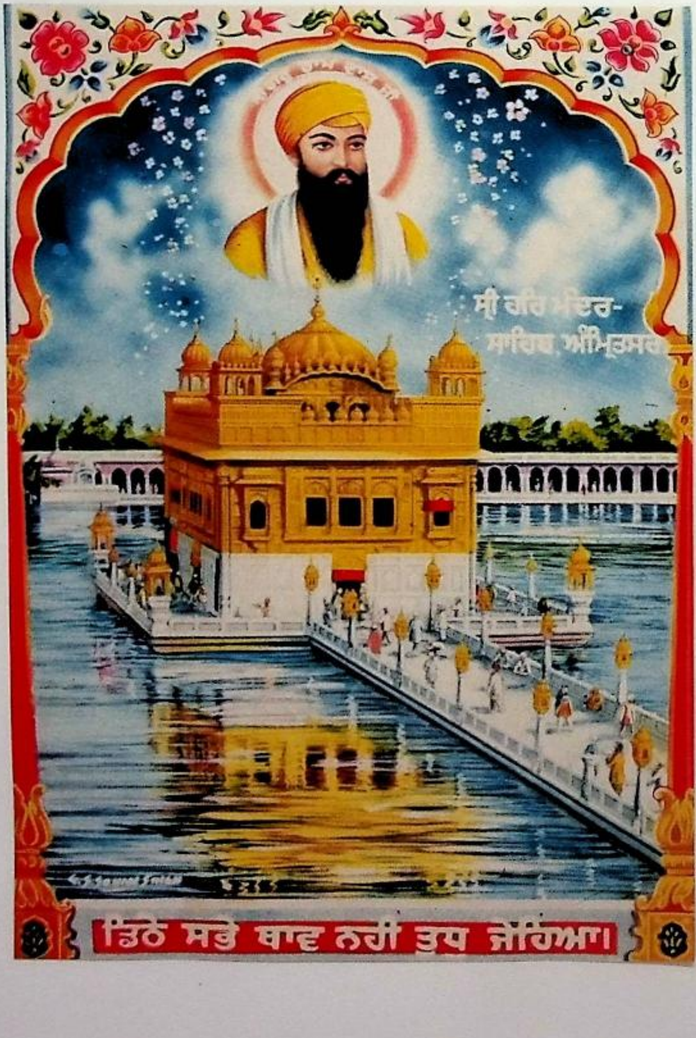


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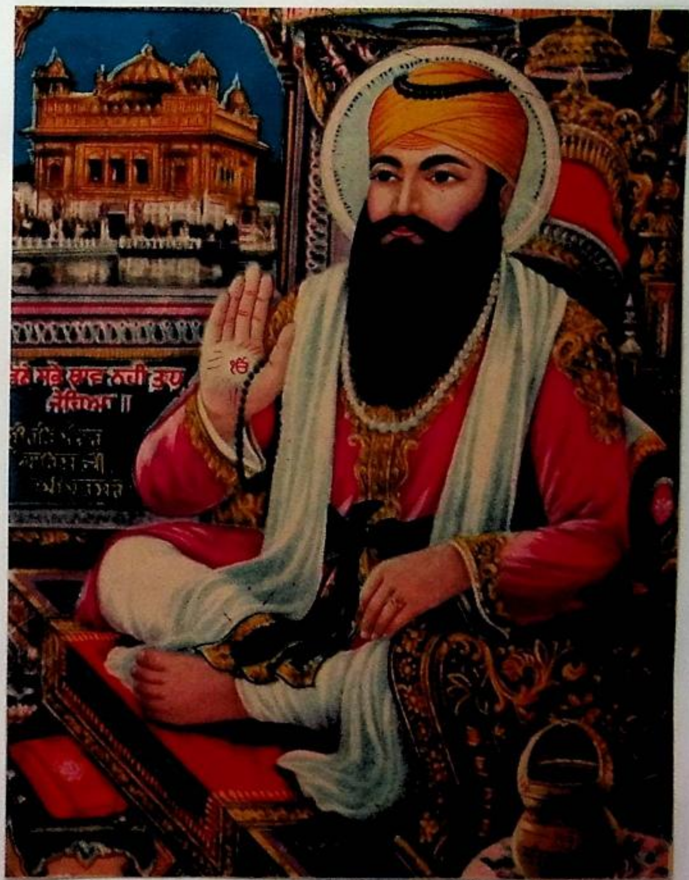


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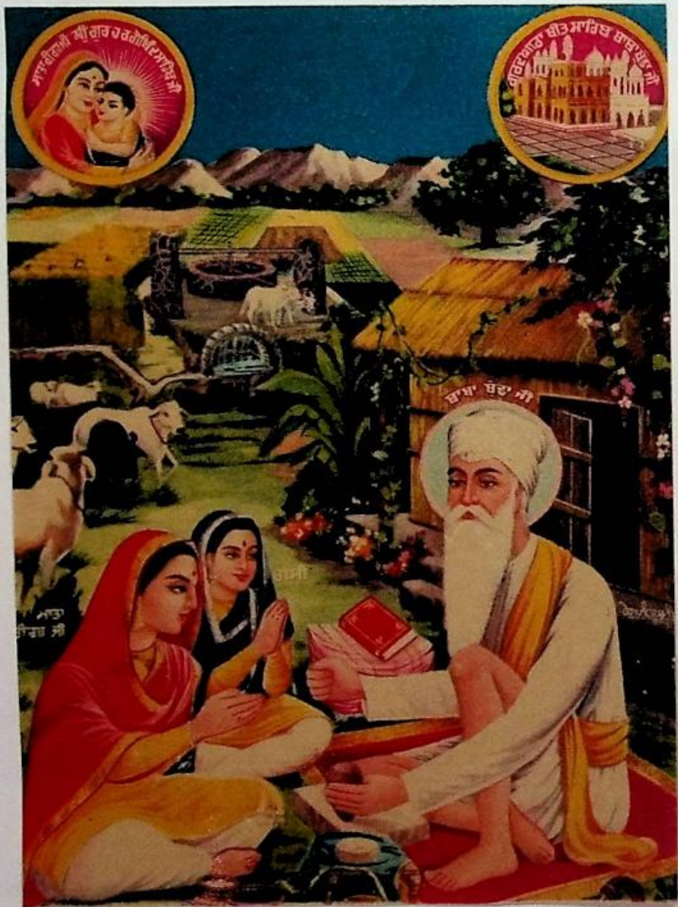


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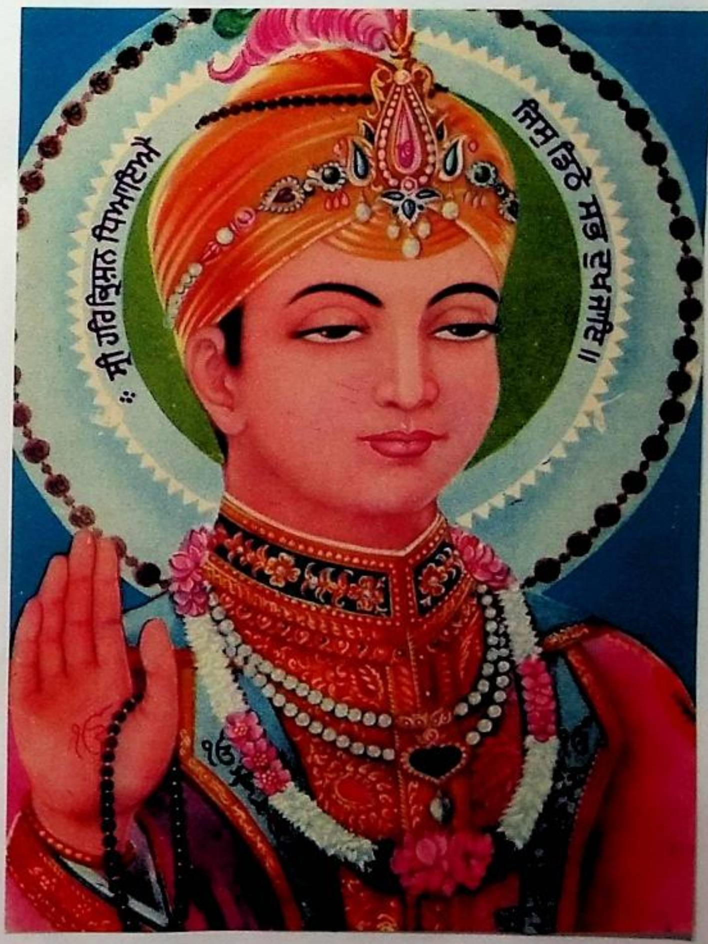


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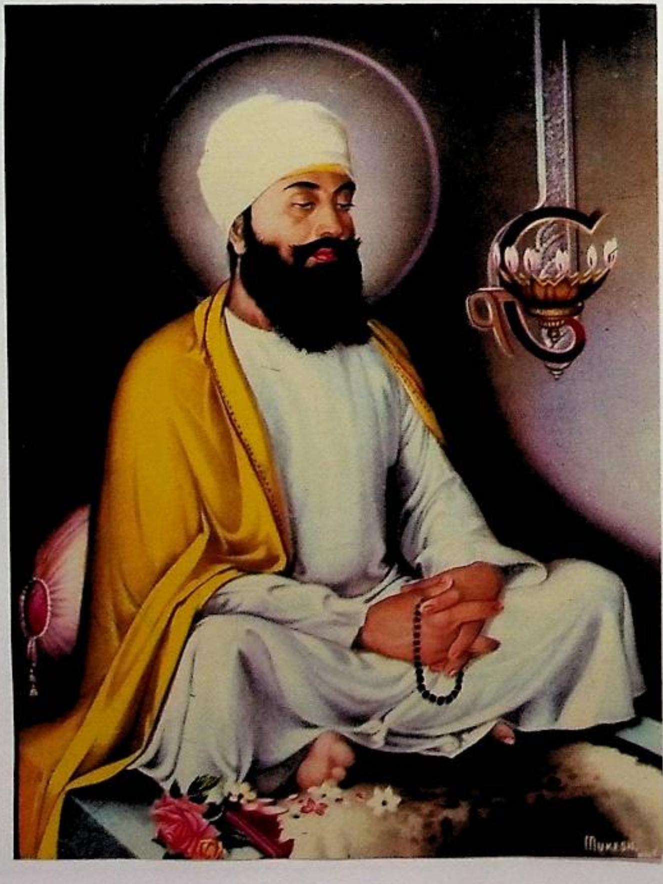


Fig. 35



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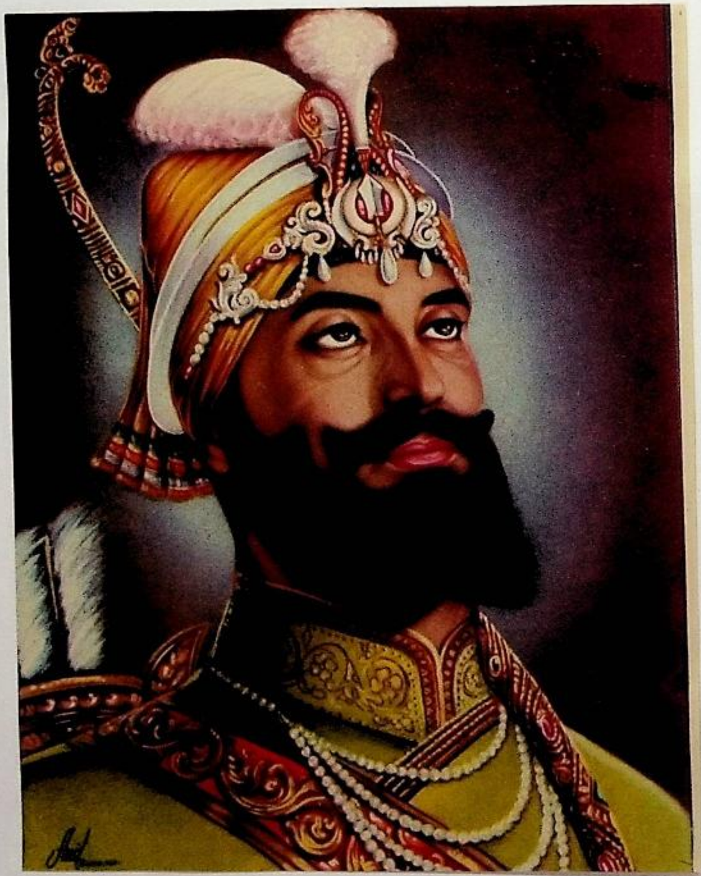


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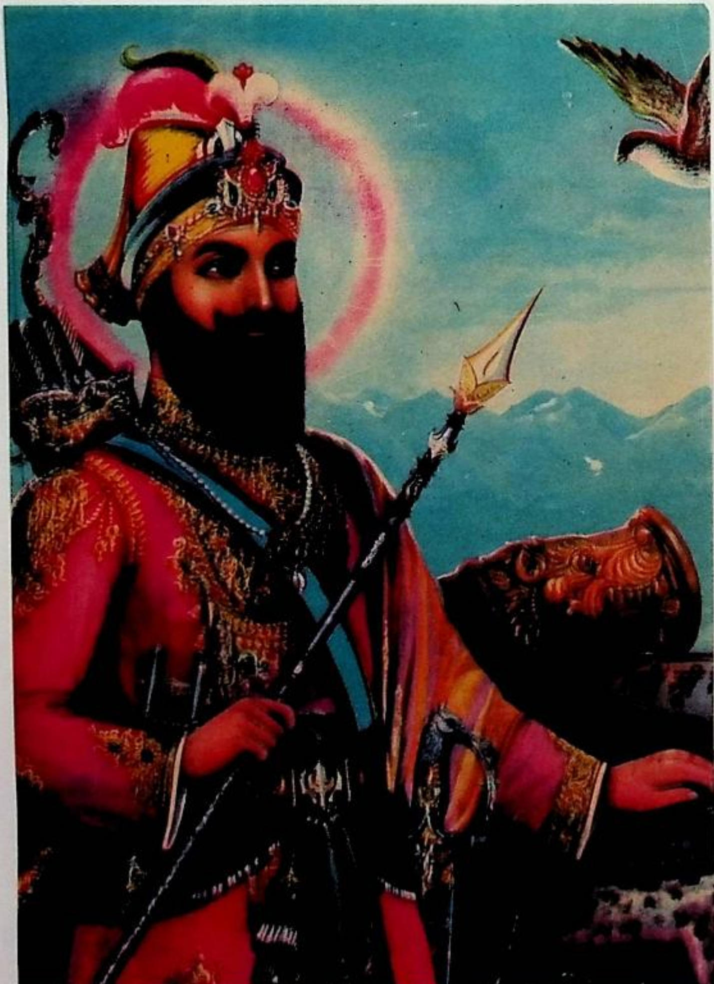


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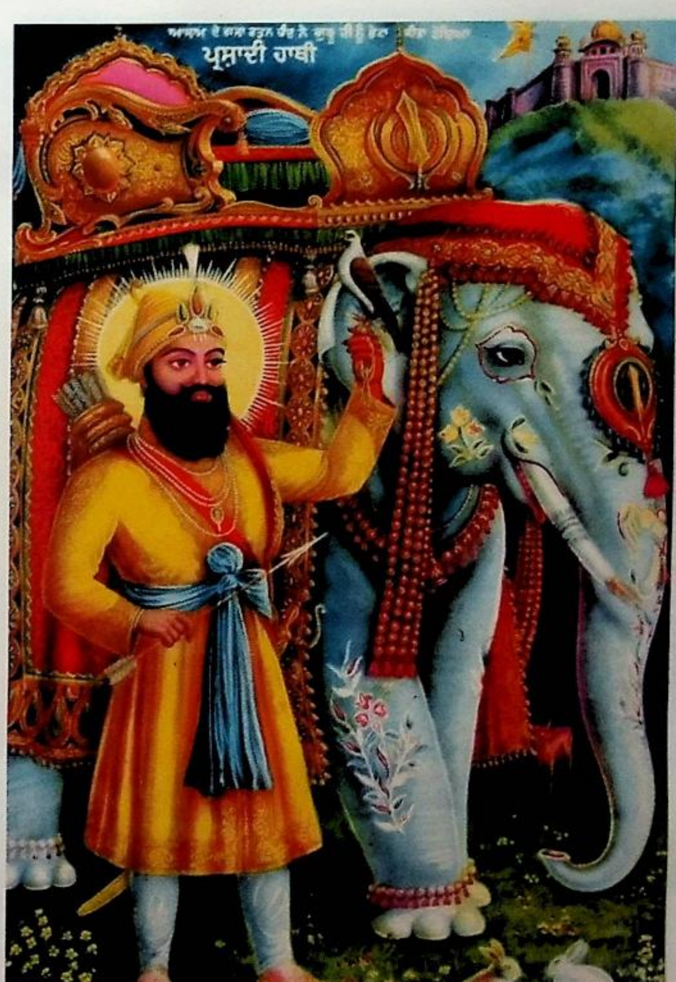


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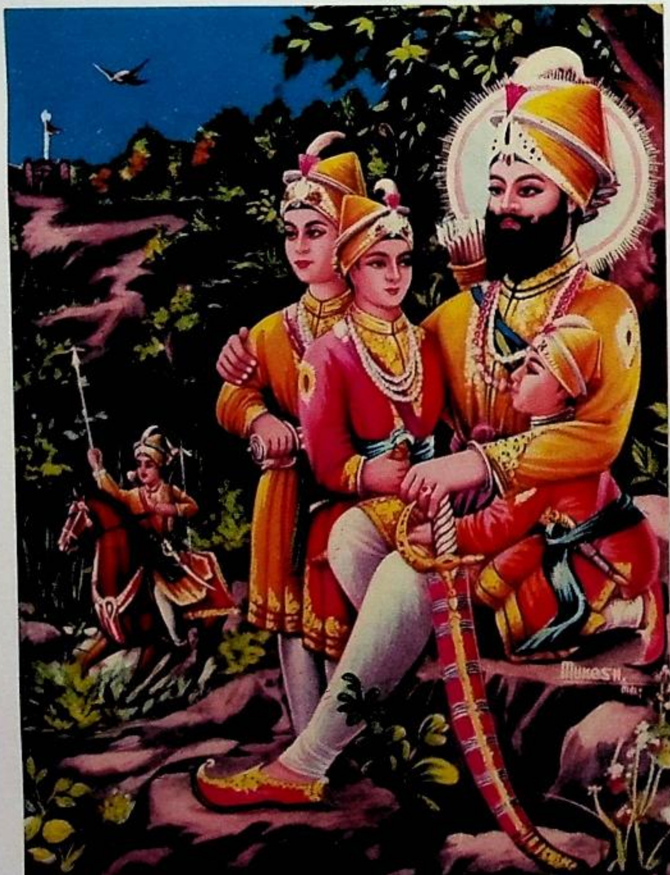


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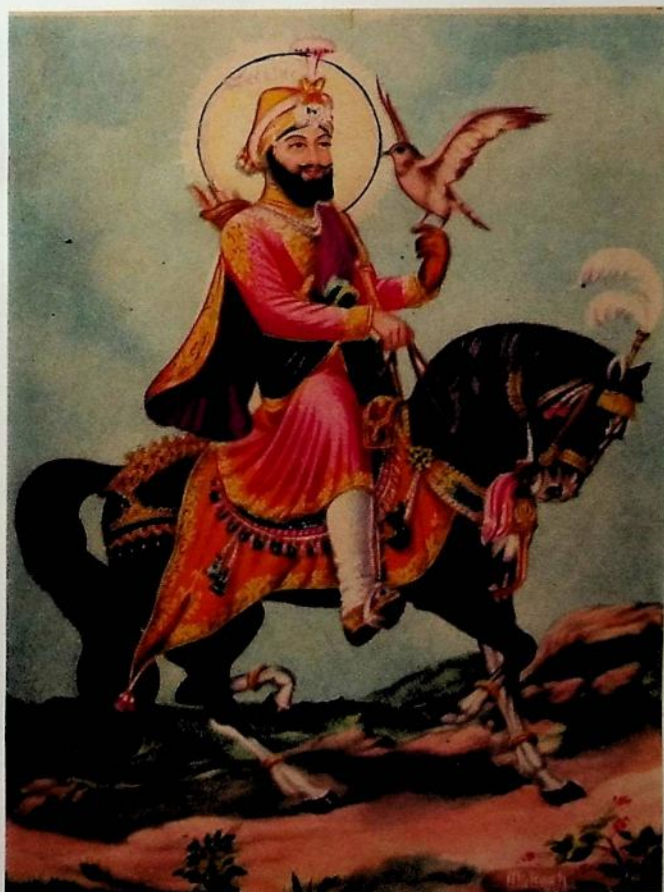


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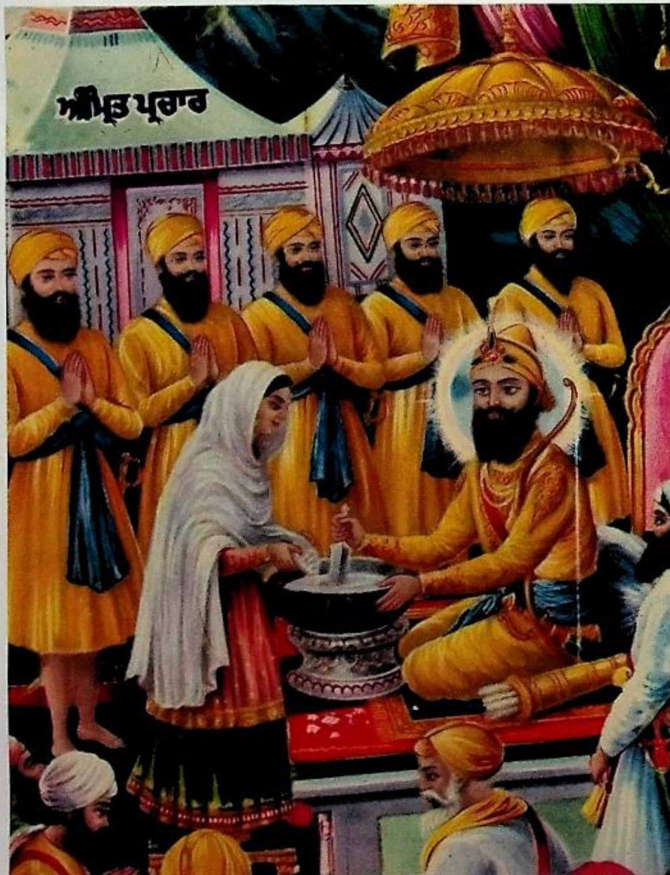


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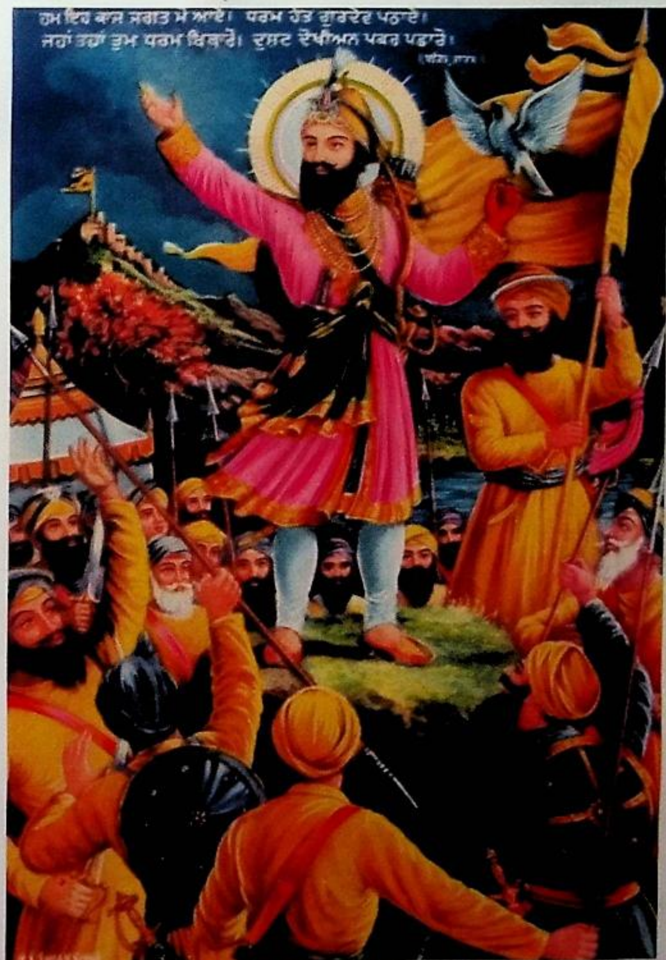


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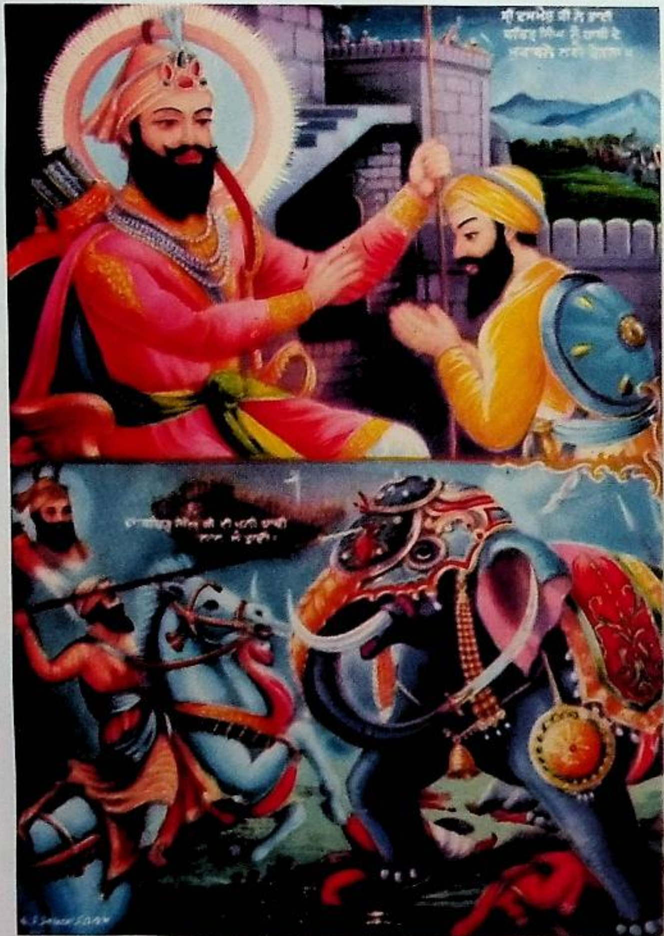


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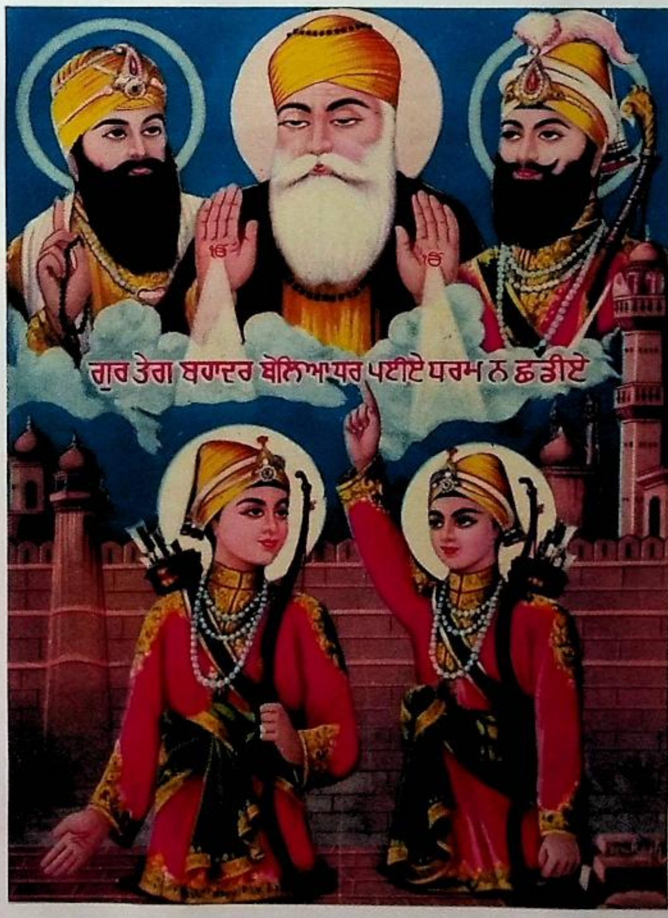


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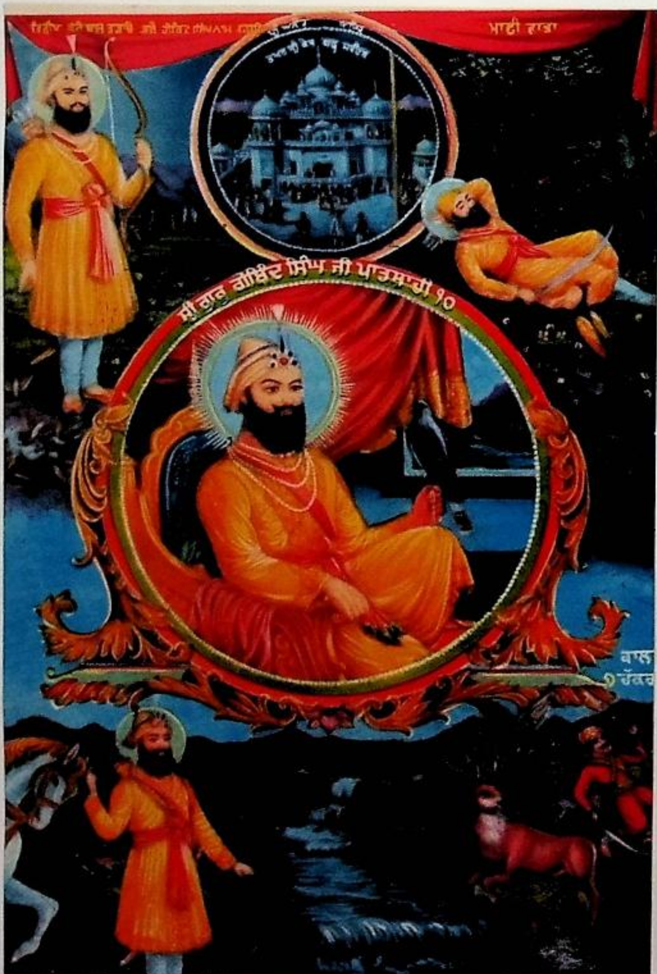


Fig. 47



Fig. 48



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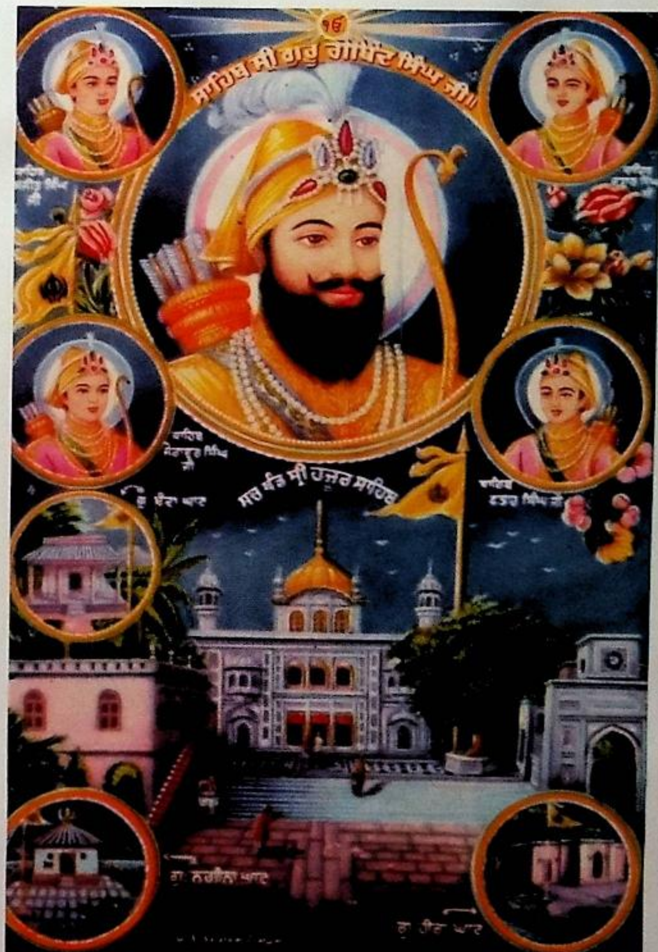


Fig. 50



Fig. 51



Fig. 52



Fig. 53



Fig. 54

List of Illustrations

Frontispiece: The Ten Gurus. Centre top: Guru Nanak in characteristic pose. Left (top to bottom): Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan. Right (top to bottom): Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Rai, Guru Har Krishan, Guru Tegh Bahadur. Centre bottom: Guru Gobind Singh. Centre (inside a halo): Guru Granth Sahib with canopy and Khalsa symbol. Flanking the portrait of Guru Gobind Singh: flags (*niśān*) bearing the Khalsa symbol.

Woodcuts

Figures 1-14 reproduce a selection from the Lockwood Kipling collection held by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Each item in this collection bears the catalogue number I.M.2( )-1917, the number within parentheses being the serial number for the individual print.

1. North view of the city of Lahore. Panoramic view of Lahore with Maharaja Ranjit Singh and attendants foreground. Coloured woodcut, Lahore, *c.* 1870. I.M.2(87)-1917. Probably prepared for a British purchaser.
2. Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Darbar. Amritsar or Lahore, *c.* 1870. I.M.2(16)-1917. For identification of various figures, see W. G. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*, p. 190.
3. Guru Nanak in 'timeless conclave' with his nine successors. Amritsar or Lahore, *c.* 1870. I.M.2(11)-1917. The Gurus who are easily recognized in all such pictures are Guru Amar Das (white beard), Guru Hargobind (with falcon and sometimes with two swords), Guru Har Krishnan (the child Guru) and Guru Gobind Singh (seated prominently in the foreground with falcon). The order in this particular print appears to be as follows. Anti-clockwise from Guru Nanak: Guru Amar Das, Guru Arjan, Guru Har Rai, Guru Tegh Bahadur. Clockwise: Guru Angad, Guru Ram Das, Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Krishan, Guru Gobind Singh. Foreground: Mardana (with rabab), Bhai Bala and unidentified figure. The nimbate Nanak is wearing a *mukaṭ* (a hat shaped like a crown) instead of a turban and has a yogi's crutch. The regal tree, caged parrot and *takīā* (cushion) are all clearly visible. Behind him is a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib on a portable lectern and in the centre foreground *kaṛāh prasād* is covered with a cloth.
4. Twelve Heroes of the Sikhs. Coloured woodcut. Lahore, *c.* 1870. I.M.2(119)-1917. For identification and detailed description, see Archer, pp. 189–90.
5. Twelve Heroes of the Sikhs. Lahore *c.* 1870. I.M.2(47)-1917. The figures represented are: Sher Singh, Ranjit Singh, Dalip Singh, Rani Jindan (first row); Dhian Singh, Gulab Singh, Sher Singh Atariwala, Chattar Singh Atariwala (second row); Dina Nath, Mul Raj, Dost Muhammad of Kabul, Akali Phula Singh. For detailed description, see Archer, p. 190.
6. The Ten Gurus. Woodcut by Soba Singh. Amritsar or Lahore, *c.* 1870. I.M.2(88)-1917. Anti-clockwise from Guru Nanak: Guru Angad, Guru Ram Das, Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Krishan, Guru Gobind Singh, Mardana (with rabab). Clockwise: Bala, Guru Amar Das, Guru Arjan, Guru Har Rai, Guru Tegh Bahadur. In the centre a tray of karah prasad sits on a *chaukī* (low stool).

7. Guru Nanak with Mardana and Bala in Mecca. Partly-coloured woodcut. Amritsar or Lahore, *c.* 1875. I.M.2(161)-1917. The Gurmukhi inscription at the top reads: 'Baba Nanak visited Mecca and demonstrated his power.' Note that the *miharāb* contains a Hindu *śiva-liṅga*. This represents a late interpolation into the janam-sakhi tradition. See W. H. McLeod, *Early Sikh Tradition*, pp. 142, 144.
8. Guru Nanak with Mardana (left) and Bala. Coloured woodcut. Amritsar or Lahore, *c.* 1875. I.M.2(125)-1917.
9. Guru Nanak discoursing with Siddhs. Amritsar. Date not clear, but appears to be S. 1932 (AD 1875). I.M.2(40)-1917. Seated with Baba Nanak are Mardana (with rabab), Bala (with peacock-feather *chaurie*) and twelve yogis. Two more yogis are flying in the air. The picture illustrates the contest involving a lost *loṭā* (water-pot) and magical powers which the janam-sakhis set in Achal Batala. Twelve of the yogis are recognizable from their large ear-rings (*mundrā*) as Kanphat or 'split-ear' (i.e. Nath) yogis. The remaining two wear conical hats. Three of the Naths are named. To the left of Baba Nanak (under the caged parrot) sits the celebrated Guru Gorakhnath, his long white beard and closed left eye strongly reminiscent of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The shaven-headed figure at the extreme left is labelled Mangal Das, and behind Bala sits Machhendranath. Gorakhnath's superior status among the Naths is indicated by the fact that he, like Baba Nanak, is supplied with a takia. Nanak's takia, however, is much larger than Gorakhnath's and he is seated on a mat beneath the regal tree. Most of the publication details originally surrounding this print have been cropped. It seems safe to assume, however, that it came from the same press as figure 10.
10. Guru Nanak hearing *kīrtan* in the presence of his two sons, four attendants and Bhai Salo. Amritsar, 1874–75. I.M.2(33)-1917. Although the inscription along the top of the print specifically states that kirtan is taking place (a claim supported by the drummer's action) Baba Nanak's own posture suggests that he is delivering *kathā* (oral instruction) to his two sons. This is implied by his right index finger and by the manuscript which he is apparently holding in his left hand (presumably a manuscript inscribed with *bāṇī*). Baba Nanak sits under the regal tree with suspended parrot in cage. Before him reverently sit his two sons Lakhmi Das and Siri Chand, the latter recognizable by his yogi attire and tiger-skin mat. Mardana and a drummer accompany the kirtan while Bala fans his Master with a chaurie. An inscription above the figure behind Bala announces: 'Bhai Salo has come for the Guru's darshan.' From the left a Sikh, dressed in the Khalsa style of the late nineteenth century, advances bearing a dish of karah prasad. A larger quantity of karah prasad sits on a stool between Baba Nanak and his sons. An English hand has mislabelled the latter portion as 'Granth'. The marginal inscription along the top reads: 'This is a picture of Guru Nanak Sahib and his sons. The Guru is seated while kirtan is being sung. Other members of the sangat are arriving. Kirtan will [soon] conclude and karah prasad will be distributed. It will be a joyful experience.' The inscription along the bottom of the print gives the date as Saturday 24 Chetra, Sammat 1931, and identifies the publisher as Gujjar Singh of the Faiz Printing Press, near Akal Banga in Amritsar. The edition is given as 2000 copies. Sammat 1931 designates the beginning of 1875 or the end of 1874 depending on whether Gujjar Singh was following the civil calendar or the astronomical one (the one the peasants observed). According to the civil calendar, Chet (or Chetra) was the first month of the year. The astronomical calendar, however, viewed it as the last month with the following month (Baisakh) marking the new year.
11. Guru Gobind Singh hunting. Amritsar, 1874–75. I.M.2(21)-1917. The inscription along the top reads: 'This picture shows the Guru Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj, hunting in the jungle.' The print is presumably intended to illustrate a famous line from canto 8 of *Bachitar Nāṭak*, a work attributed to Guru Gobind Singh: 'Many the hunts which we followed in the wastelands, pursuing the bear, the antelope and the boar.' The figure in the top left-hand corner, seated in an airship, is something of a mystery. Professor Surjit Hans thinks it may represent the departing soul of the tiger being killed. 'The idea is that an Avtar redeems the soul of the demon/enemy he kills. Only an immaterial soul could be representationally placed above the Guru.' (Personal communication.) The publication details at the bottom are the same as for figure 10.

12. Guru Gobind Singh initiating the first five members of the Khalsa. Amritsar or Lahore, *c.* 1874–75. I.M.2(179)-1917. Guru Gobind Singh sits fully armed on an ornamented throne, complete with *chhatrī* or regal umbrella. While he stirs the initiatory *amrit* with a small *kirpan* (not a *khaṇḍā*) his wife Mata Jito pours soluble sweets into the bowl. The five initiates standing respectfully before the Guru are identified from left to right as Daia Singh, Dharam Singh, Sahib Singh, Mohakam Singh and Himmat Singh. All five wear the mandatory sword and breeches (*kachh*). Man Singh, the servant fanning the Guru with a chaurie, is similarly attired. For a late nineteenth-century account of the first Khalsa initiation, see W. H. McLeod, *Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism*, pp. 34–7.
13. The Golden Temple. Amritsar, 1874–75. I.M.2(50)–1917. The caption (in Gurmukhi and Arabic script) reads: 'A picture of Darbar Sahib in Sri Amritsar.' Devotees and *sevādārs* approach the actual temple on the causeway leading from Darshani Deorhi (the entrance archway). Two of the sevadars bear trays of karah prasad and a third appears to be carrying a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib on his head. On the paved projection (larger than actual size) Khalsa Sikh and Sahaj-dhari or Hindu mingle. Within the temple an Englishman converses with a Nihang. Over the Darshani Deorhi and Darbar Sahib itself flutter pennants emblazoned with sabre, *kaṭār* dagger and either a cannon-ball or a shield. A dinghy bearing lamps is accompanied by the inscription: 'Boats of this kind do not appear every day, only during the night of Diwali.' The two tall minarets, rear left, are misplaced and should be out of the picture to the left. In their place it should be possible to see Gurdwara Baba Atal Sahib. The inscription at the bottom identifies the print as another from the Faiz Press of Bhai Gujjar Singh (see figure 10). The date is given as 29 Chetra, S. 1931; and the edition as 2100.
14. Double print illustrating: (1) A Sikh family paying homage at the shrine of Baba Atal Rai. (2) Brahma and Shiv worshipping Bhagauti (Durga). Amritsar, *c.* 1874–75. I.M.2(49)–1917. The shrine represented in the Sikh portion of the print is obviously intended to be the top storey of Gurdwara Baba Atal Rai (as the upper caption indicates); and the trays carried by the Sikh and his wife presumably contain karah prasad. The Sikh bears a strong resemblance to the sevadar who appears in figure 10. The publisher is Gujjar Singh (see figure 10) and the edition is given as 1000. No date is attached. Dual prints of this kind testify to the eclectic nature of popular Sikh taste during the late nineteenth century, an attitude soon to be attacked by the Singh Sabha reformers. It should be added that although the Singh Sabha campaign exercised a considerable influence amongst educated Sikhs it never succeeded in extinguishing the popular affection for pictures of this kind.
15. Guru Nanak. This pose has been a particularly popular one in recent years. Features to be noted include the venerable white beard, lidded eyes, hand raised in blessing, halo, saffron robe, turban tied horizontally across the forehead, *mālā* in turban and on the hand, and *selī* around the neck. This characteristic pose has been repeated by several artists, this one by Anil Sharma.
16. *Niraṅkārī darśan*: scenes from the life of Nanak. The inscription above the Guru is a quotation from Bhai Gurdas: 'When Satguru Nanak appeared on earth the darkness fled, dispelled by the light' (*Vār* 1:27). Lower centre: Gurdwara Janam-asthan, marking the birth-place of Guru Nanak in Nankana Sahib (Talvandi). Upper left: The infant Nanak with his mother Tripta. Upper right: The cobra's hood. See figure 17. Left: *Sachā saudā* (*kharā saudā*). Nanak, assisted by an equally youthful Bala, feeds the hungry sadhus. Right: Lalo and Bhago. See figure 22. Bottom: Nanak's sons, Siri Chand (left) and Lakhmi Das (right). Siri Chand wears the ear-rings of a Kanphat yogi. Artist: G. S. Sohan Singh.
17. *Sarap chhaia*, the cobra's shade. Rai Bular, headman of Talvandi village, observes a cobra with distended hood shielding the sleeping child Nanak from the sun. The child's spiritual status is also signalled by a halo, mala, and saffron robes. Rai Bular, headman of a small village, is decked with ostentatious symbols of royalty. The buffaloes grazing in the background evoke the story of the restored crop. Upper left: The infant Nanak with his parents. Upper right: Panja Sahib, the rock stopped. Artist: G. S. Sohan Singh.
18. Baba Nanak in Kauru-desh (the country ruled by women). Like other male visitors to Kauru (right foreground) Mardana has been turned into a sheep. While Bala with chaurie looks on Guru Nanak,

portrayed as a young man, confronts Nur Shah and her retinue of female magicians. The women fly at him fiercely (upper right) but the power of the divine Name (represented by the *ik-oṅkār* symbol, upper left) defeats them. The script at the top of the poster summarizes the story. Artist: G. S. Sohan Singh.

19. The monster's cauldron. Baba Nanak, now much older in appearance, saves the terrified Mardana from the clutches of the fearsome cannibal. The power of the divine Name emanates from the palm of the Guru's hand. It is also represented by the sun above the mountains. Artist: G. S. Sohan Singh.
20. Baba Nanak with Mardana and Bala. Clog sandals, embroidered mat, peacock-feather chaurie, lota and regal tree are added to the symbols noted above for figure 15. The background of mountains, trees and water signifies the tranquillity of meditation. The threesome format (full-face Nanak flanked by Mardana and Bala in profile), long favoured in janam-sakhi illustrations, retains its popularity today.
21. The devotion of Bibi Nanaki. Guru Nanak's sister Nanaki, wife of Jai Ram of Sultanpur, was bound to her younger brother by ties of both affection and devotion. While preparing a meal on one occasion she observed a *chapātī* swell on the griddle in a most appetizing manner and wished that her beloved brother could be there to eat it. Guru Nanak, far distant on his travels, received her message intuitively. Closing his eyes he was instantly transported to Sultanpur, there to receive the hot chapati. The upper portion of the print shows Guru Nanak, with patched shawl, in characteristic pose. Artist: Mukesh.
22. Lalo and Bhago. Baba Nanak squeezes milk from humble Lalo's honest food and blood from the ill-gotten fare of an astounded Malak Bhago. Artist: Mukesh.
23. Guru Nanak ploughs and waters his fields. This print is presumably intended to illustrate such passages as the first stanza of Guru Nanak's shabad *Sorath* 2 (*Ādi Granth*, p. 595):

    Regard your body as a field, your *man* the plough, [virtuous] actions the ploughing, and effort the irrigating.
    [In this field] sow the Name as seed, level it with contentment and fence it with humility.

    One buffalo-cover bears the mantra *Satinām*. On the other is embroidered *Srī Vāhigurū*, followed by the words: 'Thou the Giver of all art the divine Provider'. In the background Guru Nanak drives a buffalo which turns a Persian wheel and thus irrigates his fields. Artist: Anil Sharma.
24. Guru Nanak and his successors with the Guru Granth Sahib. Artist: Mukesh.
25. Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan, Guru Gobind Singh and the Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Nanak's halo incorporates a quotation from Bhai Gurdas: 'Hearing the cry of a world in anguish the Lord of Grace sent Guru Nanak' (*Vār* 1: 23). The halo over the Guru Granth Sahib also includes Guru Ram Das' famous words: 'The *bāṇī* is Guru and the Guru is *bāṇī*, suffused throughout with nectar' (*Ādi Granth*, p. 982). Before the veiled Guru Granth Sahib a covered dish of karah prasad sits on a stool. Sikhs coming for darshan make offerings to the sacred scripture.
26. 'Nanak the Saviour of all.' Guru Nanak's halo incorporates a quotation from *śalok* 9 of Guru Tegh Bahadur: 'All our contentment we gather from God; no other Lord can we own' (*Ādi Granth*, p. 1426). Guru Nanak is wearing the patched shawl as usual and his lidded eyes are almost shut. The child (presumably Nanak) has inscribed the *ik-oṅkār* symbol on his slate. It also appears on the Guru's uplifted hand, as embroidery on his shawl, and on the *rumāl* of the Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Gobind Singh pays homage to the Guru Granth Sahib. Beside it sits a dish of karah prasad with kirpan inserted.
27. Guru Nanak in the characteristic pose, but wearing a mukat instead of a turban. The passage within his halo is Guru Angad's famous shalok from *Āsā kī Vār* (*Ādi Granth*, p. 463):

    If the heaven should hold a hundred moons, if a thousand suns should shine,
    Without the Guru their light would be dim in a darkness dismal and cold.
28. In this print Guru Nanak sits with head erect instead of slightly bowed. The design and colours represent a different style from most portraits of Guru Nanak and is probably designed for Hindu buyers.

29. Scenes from the life of Guru Amar Das. Upper: While bringing water from the Beas river Amar Das stumbles into the weaver's pit. Lower left: Amar Das meditating. Lower right: Gurdwara Baoli Sahib in Goindval. The inscription in white is from the panegyric by the bard Bhikha: 'Blessed Amar Das, none may recount thy virtues, unique, beyond compare' (*Ādi Granth*, p. 1396). This is followed in red by 'Blessed Sri Guru Amar Das Sahibji.' Artist: G. S. Sohan Singh.
30. Amritsar revealed. The story of how the cleansing powers of Amritsar's water were first revealed is recounted in the series of pictures beginning at the bottom left. (1) The Patti magistrate questions his daughters. (2) The youngest daughter Rajni is married to a crippled leper before the traditional nuptial fire. (3) As a faithful wife Rajni carries her crippled husband to pilgrimage centres. (4) She leaves him beside the pool of Amritsar to go and beg. Her husband observes crows being turned into doves. (5) The disbelieving Rajni returns to find her husband cured. (6) The couple appear before Guru Ram Das. Centre: Dukh-bhanjani Ber or 'Pain-dispelling Ber', the tree which the leprous husband grasped while entering the pool, with Darbar Sahib (the Golden Temple) in the background. Artist: G. S. Sohan Singh.
31. Sri Harimandir Sahib. Guru Ram Das and the Golden Temple. The caption at the bottom is a famous line by Guru Arjan: 'All places have I seen; none can compare to thee' (*Ādi Granth*, p. 1362). The surroundings have been drawn as the artist imagined them to be in the early nineteenth century. Artist: G. S. Sohan Singh.
32. Guru Ram Das and Sri Harimandir Sahib. The regal Guru with heavily embroidered robes sits on a richly ornamented throne, complete with gold chhatri and canopy. From the palm of his hand emanates the power of the divine Name. The *ik-oṅkār* symbol also appears on his footstool cushion and lota, the latter followed by the invocation *satigur prasād* ('by the grace of the divine Guru'). Beneath the window-sill appears Guru Arjan's line (see figure 31) followed by the words: 'Sri Harimandir Sahib Ji, Amritsar'. Embroidered on the mat immediately above the footstool are the words: 'The Sodhi Patshah, he who is called Satguru Ram Das sat [on the Guru's *gaddī*]'. Guru Ram Das (and all the Gurus who followed him) belonged to the Sodhi sub-caste (*got*).
33. Baba Buddha promises a son to Mata Ganga. As he crushes onions which she has brought Baba Buddha assures Mata Ganga that her son will crush the heads of his enemies. Upper left: Mata Ganga and the new-born Guru Hargobind. Upper right: Gurdwara Bir Sahib Baba Buddha Ji. The gurdwara, located near Tarn Taran (Amritsar District), marks the farm where Baba Buddha resided.
34. Guru Har Krishan. The inscription in the halo is a quotation from Ardas (the Sikh Prayer): 'Dwell on Sri Hari Krishan, he whose sight dispells all pain.' The Guru's palm bears the sign of the divine Name which is also embroidered on his richly-ornamented garments. Around his neck is a string of pearls bearing the word 'Vahiguru'. Appropriate for a child his skin is fair and his eyes are lidded, similar to those of Guru Nanak.
35. Guru Tegh Bahadur. The Guru sits in meditation. Mystically suspended before him is a vertical sword, its hilt fashioned in the form of the *ik-oṅkār* symbol. The text at the bottom is from shabad Sorath 11: 'He who receives the Guru's grace acquires that skill, Nanak, whereby he merges in God as water blends with water' (*Ādi Granth*, p. 634). Artist: Mukesh.
36. Scenes from the life of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Upper left: Makhan Shah discovers the Guru in Bakala. Lower right: The execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Upper right: Guru Gobind Singh receives his father's head in Anandpur. Lower left: Gurdwara Sis Ganj in Chandni Chowk, Delhi, marking the place of execution. The inscription is a quotation from Ardas: 'Think of Guru Tegh Bahadur; thus shall every treasure come.' Artist: G. S. Sohan Singh.
37. Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru's beard is black and characteristically slightly forked; his moustache curls upwards at the end; and his turban is conical, surmounted by two quoits. The *kalgī* or aigrette on his forehead, bearing the Khalsa symbol, indicates the reason why he is commonly referred to as *Kalgīdhar*, 'the one who bears the kalgi'.

38. Guru Gobind Singh on horseback. On his left hand is a hunting falcon (another characteristic of Guru Gobind Singh).
39. Guru Gobind Singh on the battlements. The Guru's weapons are a spear, sabre, bow and arrows, katar dagger and two steel quoits. The modern Khalsa emblem appears behind the quoits and on his belt-buckle. The *ik-oṅkār* symbol can be seen on his kalgi and necklace pendant. A cannon muzzle rests on the parapet behind him and on the parapet are inscribed the words *sati srī akāl*, 'True is the Immortal One'. The Guru's falcon flutters aloft.
40. Guru Gobind Singh with the elephant donated as a thank-offering by Rattan Chand of Assam.
41. Guru Gobind Singh with his four sons Ajit Singh, Jujhar Singh, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh. Artist: Mukesh.
42. Guru Gobind Singh on horseback. Artist: Mukesh.
43. The first initiation ceremony at the founding of the Khalsa. A modern version of the scene illustrated in figure 12.
44. Guru Gobind Singh inspiring his Khalsa at Anandpur. The flag (nishan) bears a version of the old Khalsa emblem. See figure 13. The message which the Guru proclaims is a famous couplet from canto 6 of his *Bachitar Nāṭak*:

    > For this purpose I came into the world, sent by the Lord to uphold truth and righteousness.
    > Let truth and righteousness be established wherever you go, all evil assaulted and cast down.

    Artist: G. S. Sohan Singh.
45. Bachitra Singh repulses the killer elephant. Upper: Sri Dasmesh Ji (Guru Gobind Singh) sends Bhai Bachitra Singh to fight the hill rajas' elephant. Lower: Inspired by the Guru, the brave Bachitra Singh pierces the elephant's frontal shield. Artist: G. S. Sohan Singh.
46. The martyrdom of the *Sāhibzāde* (the two younger children of Guru Gobind Singh). Inspired by Guru Nanak, with Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh, the children Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh stand defiantly fearless as they are bricked into the Sirhind wall. The inscription indicates that one of the young victims is recalling Guru Tegh Bahadur's willingness to give his life but not his faith. Artist: Mukesh.
47. Scenes from Guru Gobind Singh's journey following the evacuation of Anandpur. Upper right: The Guru rests in the Machhiwara jungle. Upper left: The falcon's revenge on the partridge. Lower: The fate of Rai Kalha's disobedient grandson. Upper inset: Kesgarh Sahib, the gurdwara overlooking the ground where Guru Gobind Singh inaugurated the Khalsa in 1699.
48. Guru Gobind Singh with falcon and horse. Artist: Anil Sharma.
49. Guru Gobind Singh with falcon on his shoulder.
50. The last days of Guru Gobind Singh. Sach-khand Sri Hazur Sahib in Nanded (centre) is the gurdwara marking the place where Guru Gobind Singh died in 1708. Nanded (or Nander) is situated in the Deccan between Aurangabad and Hyderabad. Three satellite gurdwaras appear as insets (Banda Ghat, Nagina Ghat and Hira Ghat). The traditions associated with these three gurdwaras are recounted in Surinder Singh Johar, *The Sikh Gurus and Their Shrines*, pp. 299–302. Guru Gobind Singh is surrounded by inset portraits of his four sons, all youthful replicas of their father. Artist: G. S. Sohan Singh.
51. Guru Gobind Singh freeing Rustam Rao and Bala Rao. This print represents a sectarian interest. Adherents of the Namdhari (or Kuka) Sikh sect believe that Guru Gobind Singh survived his wounds in Nanded and that he returned to the Punjab to live there for many more years. On his way northwards he freed two Rajput chiefdoms from the Satara fort by having them cling to his stirrups while his horse flew them to safety. W. H. McLeod, *Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism*, pp. 127–8. Many orthodox Sikhs accept the story but interpret the Guru's role as a posthumous appearance in spirit. The tradition is commemorated by the nearby gurdwara in Manmarh (inset). The

print is a copy of a picture prominently displayed in the gurdwara. Mihar Singh Kahanpur, *Purakhu Gurū* (Sri Bhaini Sahib, 1979), p. 238. Artist: G. S. Sohan Singh.

52. Baba Dip Singh as a young man. His weapons include a two-edged broad sword, a sabre, bow and arrows, axe, kirpan, katar dagger and three quoits. He also carries a shield. In the background the beheaded Dip Singh continues to fight while holding his severed head.
53. The martyrdom of Baba Dip Singh. In the background one of his followers carries a flag bearing a version of the old Khalsa emblem. The Khalsa colours of blue and saffron dominate the print. Inset: The young Baba Dip Singh (above) and Gurdwara Shahid-ganj Sahib (below). Artist: G. S. Sohan Singh. The appeal of this print of Baba Dip Singh has substantially increased in recent years and the poster, always in much demand, is now experiencing even greater popularity. Baba Dip Singh is portrayed as the ideal *sant-sipahi* (saint-soldier), fighting for his cause. Recalling Guru Nanak's famous words of how the loyal disciple must come 'with your head on the palm of your hand' (*Ādi Granth*, p. 1412) he is depicted as obeying the command precisely. Today one frequently reads and hears the exhortation to come 'with heads upon your palms for sacrifice'.
54. Vadbhag Singh. Although the ten Gurus are now firmly established in Sikh tradition their authority was not always accepted without dispute. A number of rival contenders appeared at various times, each claiming to represent the legitimate succession. One such claimant was Dhir Mal, grandson of Guru Hargobind and elder brother of Guru Har Rai. Dhir Mal, having acquired the original copy of the Guru Granth Sahib, used it to buttress his claims. The manuscript is still held by his descendants in the town of Kartarpur (District Jalandhar). The most famous of Dhir Mal's descendants was Baba Vadbhag Singh who died in 1762. Vadbhag Singh became famous as a banisher of evil spirits, thus initiating a cult which continues to the present day. The actual cure is said to depend on bathing in the waters below the Dholdhar Waterfall (located in Una district, near Hoshiarpur). Early in the eighteenth century the waters became inaccessible because of the presence of a fierce savage called Nahar Singh Bir. In order to restore access Baba Vadbhag Singh visited the waterfall and having turned Nahar Singh into a tiny child imprisoned him in a cage. Those who thereafter visited Dholdhar to regain their sanity were required to bathe in the waters and then appear before Baba Vadbagh Singh with hair untied.

    The story of Vadbhag Singh is illustrated in the upper picture. Before him frenzied women shake their untied hair, awaiting the blessing which will cure them. At left sits Vadbhag Singh's sister Bibi Bhani. The lower left picture shows him stilling a storm in response to the prayers of a threatened vessel's crew. This story replicates the orthodox tradition concerning Makhan Shah, the merchant who subsequently identified Tegh Bahadur as the ninth Guru (figure 36, upper left). Another popular tradition is copied in the third picture. Here Baba Vadbhag Singh, mounted on a white horse, is shown ascending from his funeral pyre to his heavenly abode. This resembles a tradition associated with Guru Gobind Singh. The principal centre of the cult is Narain, near the Dholdhar Waterfall. Branches are located in Kartarpur and a few other towns in the Punjab.

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For detailed bibliographies, see F. S. Aijazuddin, *Pahari Paintings and Sikh Portraits in the Lahore Museum* and W. G. Archer, *Paintings of the Sikhs*.

Glossary

Ādi Granth: the Guru Granth Sahib, sacred scripture of the Sikhs.
Akāl Purakh: the Eternal One, God.
amrit: nectar, the water of immortality; sanctified water.
Ardās: the Sikh Prayer recited as a part of many rituals.
Bābā: 'Father', a term of respect applied to holy men.
bairāgan: either a small T-shaped crutch on which an ascetic (*bairāgī*) leans while seated; or a longer article used for walking.
bāṇī (*vāṇī*): speech; the utterances of the Gurus and bhagats recorded in the *Ādi Granth*. The amplified form *gurbāṇī* is commonly used.
bhagat (*bhakta*): an exponent of *bhagti* (*bhakti*); a devotee; a religious poet whose works are included in the *Ādi Granth* (q.v.), e.g. Kabir.
Bhāī: 'Brother', a title applied to Sikhs of learning or piety.
Bībī: woman, wife, sister (a term of affectionate and respectful address).
chaddar: shawl; sheet.
chakkar (*chakra*): [steel] quoit.
chapātī: thin disc of unleavened bread.
chaukī: stool; pedestal; small throne.
chaurī: chowrie, whisk made from peacock-feathers, horse-hair, etc.
chhatrī: small umbrella (symbolizing royal authority).
chhoṭā (pl. *chhoṭṭē*): small.
darbār: court.
darśan: darshan; view, vision; audience with a person of regal or spiritual stature, visit to a holy shrine or object.
fakīr: 'poor man', Muslim renunciant; loosely used to designate Sufis and also non-Muslim renunciants.
gaddī: 'throne'; spiritual or temporal authority.
gurduārā: gurdwara, Sikh temple.
Gurmat: the Gurus' teachings, Sikhism.
Gurmukhī: the script used for writing Punjabi.
haṭha-yoga: 'yoga of force', a variety of yoga requiring physical postures and processes of extreme difficulty.
jāmā: robe, gown, long shirt.
janam-sākhī: hagiographic narrative of the life of Guru Nanak.
Jaṭ: a rural caste, the dominant caste in most Punjabi villages and the most numerous in the Panth.
jūtī: shoe, slipper.
kalgī: plume, aigrette fixed in turban.

Kānphaṭ: 'split-ear'; Nāth yogi (q.v.).
kaṛāh prasād: sacramental food dispensed in gurdwaras.
kaṭār: broad-blade dagger fastened to cross-bar with short bars extending from each end of the cross-bar to provide protection for the wrist.
Khālsā: the Sikh order, brotherhood, instituted in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh.
khaṇḍā: two-edged sword.
kirpān: sword or dagger (mandatory for members of the Khalsa).
kīrtan: corporate singing of hymns.
laṅgar: the kitchen attached to every gurdwara from which vegetarian food is served to all regardless of caste or creed.
loṭā: small round pot.
mālā: rosary.
man (*manas*): mind, heart, soul, psyche.
masand: a regional supervisor. The Gurus delegated pastoral and tithe-collecting responsibilities to masands. During the course of the seventeenth century they became increasingly independent and were eventually disowned by Guru Gobind Singh.
mīrī: worldly authority, the authority of a *mīr* (master, king).
misl: Sikh military bands of the eighteenth century.
mukaṭ: crown-shaped hat with small dome.
nām: the divine Name, the expression of the nature and being of God in terms comprehensible to the human understanding.
Nāth: lit. 'master'. A yogic sect of considerable influence prior to and during the time of the early Sikh Gurus. Its members, who are also known as Kanphat yogis, practised hatha-yoga (q.v.) in order to obtain immortality.
Nihaṅg: member of a Khalsa sect noted for blue garments, steel weapons, and general militancy.
niśān: nishan; symbol, flag.
pājāmā: trousers, pants.
panth: lit. path, road. System of religious belief and practice. The form 'Panth' designates the Sikh community.
Pātśāh: king.
pīrī: spiritual authority.
pothī: volume, tome.
qāzī, qāḍī: a Muslim judge, adminstrator of Islamic law.
rabāb: stringed instrument resembling a rebeck.
rahit, rahat: the code of discipline of the Khalsa (q.v.).
rumāl: cloth wrapping or mantle for the *Ādi Granth* (q.v.).
sadhu: one who has attained spiritual excellence; holy man; renunciant.
Sahaj-dhārī: a Sikh who neither accepts baptism into the Khalsa (q.v.) nor observes its code of discipline.
sāhibzādā (pl. *sāhibzāde*): well-born young man, son of a notable father; son of Guru Gobind Singh.
sākhī: section of a janam-sakhi.
samādhi: tomb, cenotaph.
saṅgat: assembly, religious congregation.
Sant: one who has attained truth. In current Sikh usage the term designates a spiritual preceptor who delivers religious teaching and attracts disciples.
Satgurū: the 'True Guru', the divine Guru.
selī: necklace or cord worn by a fakir (q.v.).
sevādār: servant, gurdwara attendant.
shabad (*śabad*): a hymn from the *Ādi Granth* (q.v.).
shahīd (*śahīd*): martyr.

shalok (*ślok*): couplet or stanza.
Siddh (*Siddha*): Nath master (q.v.), the eighty-four exalted personages believed to have attained immortality through the practice of yoga and to be dwelling deep in the Himalaya.
śiva-liṅga: phallic emblem of Shiv (Siva).
takīā: bolster, large cylindrical cushion.
tilak: a mark applied to the forehead as an ornament, a sectarian symbol, a sign of betrothal, or as part of an investiture ceremony.

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